THE THEATRE OF TODAY

EDITED BY GEORGE JEAN NATHAN

CHICAGO

BY

MAURINE WATKINS

NEW YORK

ALFRED · A · KNOPF

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PREFACE

For this play, the first to be published in the library of significant modern theatrical compositions to be known as *The Theatre of Today*, those critics who have a fondness for pigeon-holes have had a hard time laying hold of an appropriate label. It isn't, they feel, quite satire and it isn't merely burlesque, so what is it? They are at their wits' ends; the situation is one for head-scratching and nail-biting. In this juncture, I come to the rescue with my customary wisdom and sagacity and settle the problem with the utmost ease by assuring the sadly perplexed and sorely tried brethren that this play is simply this play, just as "The Hairy Ape" and "Peter Pan" are "The Hairy Ape" and "Peter Pan" and just as Richard Strauss' "Don Quixote" is Richard Strauss' "Don Quixote." It is itself, which should be enough of a label to satisfy anyone.

This "Chicago" may be described roughly as a burlesque show written by a satirically minded person. The burlesque note is constantly uppermost, though now and again one gets a hint of irony. What the author has tried to do, and has succeeded admirably in doing, is to set forth a caricature of the Illinois frontier town that hides behind a mask of metropolitan civilization and that is yet actually not far removed, either geographically or spiritually, from that other Illinois hell-pot called Herrin. The caricature she has contrived with an uncommon dexterity: she has fixed the essence of the Chicago of today to the stage with the skill of a

dramatic Massaguer or Covarrubias. Its exaggeration never for a moment becomes a burden to its recognizability; its emphasis and underscoring have the convincing naturalness and appositeness of so many foreign italics on an English type page. But, just as caricature is best in the way that a biting retort is best, to wit, on the wing and not too long lingered over, so is dramatic caricature likely to lose a measure of its force when perpetuated for the standard length of an evening's entertainment. Although Miss Watkins has done an excellent job in the face of the difficulties that confronted her, she has not managed entirely to avoid the degree of repetition and satiety that must inevitably attach itself to any such relatively thick volume of cartoon humor. Yet, with its few unavoidable defects, her play is an eminently worth-while affair, its roots in verity, its surface polished with observation and humorous comprehension, its whole witty, wise and appropriately mordant. It is American to the core; there is not a trace of imitativeness in it; and it discloses, unless I am badly mistaken, a talent that will go a considerable distance in the drama of the land.

The perplexity over the labels "burlesque" and "satire" may be handily explained. The two are often not so far removed from each other as the professors would have us believe. Burlesque at its best is automatically satirical, and satire when it speaks above a whisper unmistakably shouts a friendly hello to burlesque. There never was a genuine satirist who didn't plainly have trouble keeping his slapstick hidden, nor has there ever been a first-rate writer of burlesque who wasn't, whether he knew it or not, something of a satirist. Satire is burlesque in a dress suit. Burlesque is satire with its shirt-tail hanging out.

In various reviews of the performed play which have come to my eye, I note a severe criticism of the actors for letting on periodically that the material they are dealing with is funny. The contention is that any such funny material must, in order to get the desired effect, be played with an absolutely straight face. In this we engage one of the persistent pieces of nonsense of theatrical criticism. It is readily to be granted that certain comical material must be played in that way, but it should be equally obvious that certain other comical material should not be played in that way. A quiet farce must be acted soberly by its players, where a sofa-jumping one must be acted like a picnic. A satire must be played as seriously as drama, a burlesque as gayly as musical comedy. "Chicago," being neither burlesque nor satire, that is, being neither distinctly, must be played as it has been played, now in the serious, now in the spoofing, manner. A farce like "Charley's Aunt" cannot be played as one like "The Illusionist" must be played. A straight satire like "General John Regan" must be played otherwise than a burlesque satire like "Seven Keys to Baldpate." The caricatured melodrama called "Arsène Lupin" was played in France with a measure of eye-winking and was an enormous success. In America, it was played straight, and was accordingly a dismal failure.

The note of satirical burlesque is strange to the American theatrical ear. It has seldom been struck, and then with but indifferent success. "Chicago," it seems to me, marks the happiest attempt to date. In it, we may find an inkling and a promise of the soundly sophisticated drama of an increasingly receptive and intelligent native playhouse.

GEORGE JEAN NATHAN.

Feb. 15, 1927.

CHARACTERS

Roxie Hart, *"the prettiest woman ever charged with murder in Chicago."*
Fred Casely, *"the other man."*
Amos Hart, *"her meal-ticket husband."*
Billy Flynn, *her attorney—"best in the city, next to Halliday."*
Martin S. Harrison, *Assistant State's Attorney.*
Charles E. Murdock, *police sergeant.*
Jake, *reporter on The Morning Gazette.*
Babe, *photographer on The Morning Gazette.*
Mary Sunshine, *sob sister on The Evening Star.*
Mrs. Morton, *matron at Cook County Jail.*

<table>
<tr><td>Velma, "stylish divorcée."
Liz, "God's Messenger."
Moonshine Maggie, "hunyak."
Go-to-Hell Kitty, "the Tiger Girl."
Machine-Gun Rosie, the Cicero Kid.</td><td>Inmates of Murderess Row</td></tr>
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Judge, Jury, Bailiffs, Clerk, Photographers, Reporters.

Prologue, Friday night. Bedroom of Amos Hart.
Act I, Sunday afternoon—two days later. Woman's Ward of the Cook County Jail.
Act II, noon one month later. Same as Act I.
Act III:
- Scene 1, morning—seven weeks later. Prisoner's room.
- Scene 2, later—same day. Judge Canton's Court.

Chicago—Present Day

COUNTY FREE

PROLOGUE

Six fifty-eight P. M., April the third.

SCENE: *Bedroom of* AMOS HART *and others. A corner room, first floor, in one of those cheap modern flats on Chicago's South Side. There's an entrance with fountain and flowers, but pine and beaver-board within. Mission finish to the heavily pretentious woodwork—solid doors, beams, and molding. Furniture red and glistening like a courtesan's polished nails. Flowered paper, gaudy rugs on the wide-board floor. Everything new and tawdry, everything cheap and shiny.*

Two windows [center rear] look out on the court, a door [left] opens into an adjoining room, and another [right] into a narrow hall, with living-room straight ahead and outside door [unseen]. Another door [left] opens into a small closet, filled ninety-eight per cent with feminine garments; two pairs of trousers and a coat are accorded one hook in the corner.

Between the two windows, with foot-board to the front, is a large brass bed, with covers thrown back in confusion and pillows tossed together. At its head is a night-table, with telephone, a stoutish bottle and a couple of glasses—empty but not unsoiled—an ash-tray, and a box of cigarettes.

At the right is a large vanity-dresser, equipped with all the known weapons of offense and instruments of

preservation: bottles and atomizers, jars of cream, powder, rouge, perfumes—especially perfumes, that fill the air with their heavy cloying odors!—silver embossed brushes and comb filled with hair; manicure set of imitation ivory; eyebrow pencils, and lipstick. And over it all a heavy film of pinkish powder. Half-closed drawers reveal shoes, intimate garments—peach and pink crepe de chine with deep Val lace—soiled hose, hats, and gloves, in endless confusion.

To the left of the center window—between it and the door to the hall—is a victrola. There are records on the floor, sorted to the player's choice. It is playing now: heavy, rhythmic jazz, with the sinful insistence of the tom-tom and the saxophone's wailing plea.

The man, a man perhaps of thirty, stands in the doorway, pulling on his coat and turned to go. The woman, a girl of twenty-three or so, stands by the foot of the bed watching him, and she steadies herself with one hand on the rail. Steadies herself from emotion perhaps, perhaps from the drink that left empty bottle.

She is slender, beautifully slender; as you can see, through the diaphanous, flashy négligée of blue georgette with its flounce of imitation lace and accordion-plaited ruffles. And the face is beautiful, too, with short upper lip, pouting mouth, tiptilted nose, wide dark eyes, skin of the finest texture, and hair the color of flame. Turned now in profile there's a hint of a Raphael angel—with a touch of Medusa.

ROXIE [*a shrill, hysterical voice that is vile in anger*]: You damned tightwad!

[*Her voice is lowered with hatred.*]

Like *hell* you're through!

[*One white arm flings around to the dresser, one white hand searches the drawer and brings forth the latest necessity of milady's boudoir: a pearl-handled .32 revolver. Her voice stabs with virulent rage.*]

You God-damned *louse*—!

[*She pulls the trigger, then stands fixed: he sways, crumples, falls—a soft, thuddy fall. Outside the window children are singing and playing under the swaying arc-light; but within there is a silence. Except for the tom-tom's sensuous beat and the saxophone's last sad wail. From the next room comes the cheerful, idiotic call of the cuckoo: "Cuckoo . . . cuckoo . . . cuckoo . . ." It's seven o'clock.*

[*The curtain falls for an instant to denote the passage of three and one-half hours and it rises again on the same room, with the dead man removed. The table has been drawn out, and behind it sits* POLICE SERGEANT MURDOCK, *a heavy, bluff fellow of fifty or so, with ruddy face and heavy jowls. In the middle of the floor sits* AMOS, *an awkward creature of thirty-five or six, with a low forehead, snub nose, and a weak chin. He wears a noble, melancholy air, and enjoys the procedure thoroughly. His clothes bear the odor of the "shop," and his hands are marked with grease and grime.*

[A NEWSPAPERMAN—*a rough and ready chap in the middle twenties, with keen eyes and cynical smile—leans over the foot of the bed, listening as the* SERGEANT *dictates to* AMOS, *who writes laboriously.*]

SERGEANT [*dictating*]: "Voluntarily and of my own free will——"

AMOS: Freely and gladly!

JAKE: Ain't he the cheerful murderer though!

AMOS [*quickly*]: That ain't murder—shootin' a burglar. Why, only last week the jury *thanked* a man!

JAKE [*scoffing*]: Burglar, huh!

AMOS [*excitedly*]: Well, he was! Climbin' right in that there window!

SERGEANT [*impatiently*]: Come on—*sign.*

AMOS: I ain't signin' nothin' 'ness he says it's a burglar.

SERGEANT: Say, he ain't tryin' the case—*sign.*

[AMOS *signs;* OFFICER *takes and reads with satisfaction.*]

And mind yuh don't say we beat yuh up or showed yuh the goldfish or nothin' when yuh get on the witness-stand.

AMOS [*with injured dignity*]: I'll not. I gave myself up, you know. [*Dramatically.*] Surrendered myself to the law!

SERGEANT [*turns to* REPORTER, *who has taken the telephone*]: That wipes *that* off the books—God, how I hate to have 'em hangin' over "unsolved"! How's that for quick work, Gazette? [*He looks at his watch.*] The call come at 9:30, and in less than an hour we've made the arrest and got a signed confession!

JAKE [*at phone*]: Dearborn O-five hundred . . . right. . . . [*To the* SERGEANT.] Slick enough, all right! [*At the phone.*] City desk. . . .

SERGEANT: Put that in your story and don't forget who done it: Sergeant Charles E. Murdock—and *don't* forget the *E.*

JAKE: You know me!

SERGEANT [*with a grunt*]: I know your whole damn tribe!

JAKE [*at phone*]: Hello, Tommy, is the Boss there? . . . Well, gimme a rewrite man. . . . Callahan talking. [*In an easy, drawling monotone.*] Still on the Hart case . . . yeah, Coroner's just gone with the body—sure, he's dead, all right . . . Caseley's the name: C-A-S-E-L-Y. Found a card in his pocket—auto salesman for Waverly, 1861 South Michigan——

AMOS [*starts up*]: What's that? Didn't show *me* no card!

SERGEANT: Shut up.

JAKE [*in the phone*]: Might check on that—maybe there's a story *there.* Pretty tame here if he's tellin' the truth, but it sounds kinda' fishy to *me.* . . . Hart works at night, yuh see, mechanic at Phillips' Garage, 6701 Cottage Grove. . . . O, a queer cuss with an Andy Gump head on an Abe Lincoln chassis. . . . Well, he gets home a little after nine, finds his wife asleep, gets a snack to eat, comes back to the bedroom and finds this guy climbin' in the window, grabs his gun and lets him have it. . . . Yeah, they got a confession all right—came right across with it. . . . Sure, either crazy or knows his Chicago!

AMOS [*complacently*]: I ain't as dumb as I look.

SERGEANT: Hey, WHO got a confession?

JAKE: O yeah, Dicky, get this right now: the call was answered by Sergeant Charles E. Murdock—D-O-C-K—and Policeman— What's his name, Sergeant?—the gink outside?

SERGEANT: Patterson—Michael Patterson.

JAKE: —Patterson of the Hyde Park station, who made the arrest and obtained a signed confession in less

than an hour. . . . And Martin S. Harrison is here from the State's Attorney's office—he's talkin' to the wife. And O baby, she's a red-hot mama with an angel face! We'll run her in the picture. . . .

AMOS: *Picture?*

JAKE: You've got the idee, but yuh better run it as straight news till I get more dope; tame if true, and cheap any way yuh take it. . . . Sure, I'll ring yuh back when Babe gets here. . . . Right! . . . S'long. . . . [*Hangs up receiver and turns to* MURDOCK.] Say, Big Boy, the photographer's on his way—be here any minute now—for a couple of flashes. We can stick around till he gets here, huh?

SERGEANT: You newspaper fellahs think the whole police department is a show run for your benefit.

JAKE [*grinning*]: Well, ain't it?

SERGEANT: No, it *ain't*. I'm clearin' up this here case because it's in my line uh duty——

JAKE: Sure—it means your bread and butter. [*Slaps officer's knee.*] But don't forget where the jam comes from, Old Timer. You're one of our men, ain't yuh? Well, yuh've got to play ball.

SERGEANT: I am, ain't I? What do you want? See anyone here from the other papers? [*Chuckling.*] They're holdin' the bag at the station!

[ASSISTANT STATE'S ATTORNEY HARRISON *comes in from the next room. He is a tall young man of the student type, with eager, nervous manner—now almost bursting with suppressed excitement; a little near-sighted, with tortoise-shell glasses; aquiline nose, thin lips.*]

Well—well: I've *got* him for you, Mr. Assistant State's Attorney! And here's your confession, all sewed up!

HARRISON: Good!

SERGEANT [*cheerfully*]: Not that it amounts to a damn, for he'll deny every word of it when he comes to trial.

AMOS [*with dignity*]: I won't. I shot him, and I'm prepared——

JAKE: To wear a hero's medal!

HARRISON [*takes a seat facing* AMOS *and nods encouragingly*]: That's the way to talk now, and if you stick *to* it, I'll help you. Provided you make a clean breast of it.

SERGEANT: What's the matter? Tryin' to shoot holes in that confession? It's all there, ain't it, in black and white, and he tells just how he done it.

HARRISON: That clears your books, but *I* want to know the motive. [*Smiles pleasantly at* AMOS.] For you don't *look* like a man, Mr. Hart, who'd shoot a fellow-being down in cold blood.

AMOS: I didn't—I was defendin' my home, just like I told you: found him climbin' in the window——

HARRISON: A total stranger?

AMOS [*emphatically*]: Never saw him before in my life!

SERGEANT: My God, Harrison, *I* covered all that!

HARRISON [*ignoring* SERGEANT]: And your wife—are you willing to swear that he was a total stranger to her, too?

AMOS: Yes, sir.

HARRISON: All right; suppose you add that. [*Dictates, and* AMOS *scrawls in the stenographer's notebook.*] "To the best of my knowledge the deceased was also totally unknown to my wife, Roxie Hart."

AMOS [*signs statement*]: Say, what's the big idea?

HARRISON: I trust *you*, Mr. Hart, but not the attorney

you'll see tomorrow. [*He turns to others with satisfaction.*] They can't spring the "unwritten law" *now.*

AMOS: Say, there's no unwritten law in this!

HARRISON: I'll say there isn't! You've sworn it away right here! [*He opens the door and shoves* AMOS *into the charge of the* POLICEMAN *in the next room.*] Patterson! [*To the* SERGEANT.] Stranger, hell! Why, she's been carrying on with that guy for months! And admits it here [*he taps paper in his pocket*] in the nastiest little statements any jury ever read! [*He calls at door at left.*] MRS. HART! [*To the* SERGEANT] She's talking now, all right! [*Goes to room at right, with* AMOS, *and* ROXIE *enters: dishevelled, excited, with a look of furtive cunning in her eyes, red from weeping.*]

ROXIE: Where's my husband?

SERGEANT [*with a glance at her filmy costume*]: Say, you'd better get into some clothes, sister.

ROXIE: What for? *He* promised I'd go free—*I* ain't done nothin'.

SERGEANT [*shakes his head*]: Shake a leg, kid: clothes.

[*She goes to the closet and begins dressing; no one minds, especially* ROXIE.]

Well, well, so yuh been cheatin'! Ain't yuh 'shamed now, your sweetie dead and your husband held for murder? So you was right here all the time! And what did *you* do while he filled him full of lead, huh?

ROXIE [*with a little gasp of fear*]: Begged 'em to stop —fightin' they was; threw myself between 'em——

JAKE: The story picks up!

SERGEANT: *Fightin'?*

ROXIE [*gaining confidence*]: Sure—jealous! You should uh seen 'em—mad about me, both of 'em, *perfectly mad. . . .*

SERGEANT: Where d'yuh meet him?

ROXIE: At the office—where I work.

SERGEANT [*to* JAKE]: See? That's what happens when a woman leaves the home. [*To* ROXIE.] What do yuh do?

ROXIE: I'm a secretary.

SERGEANT: So you're a stenographer . . . humph. . . . [*Looking at statement.*] How long has this been goin' on? [*Pause.*] All right—speak up.

ROXIE: The first time—really—was Christmas.

SERGEANT: That's a nice way for a married woman to be carryin' on, now ain't it! . . . Plannin' to run off and marry him?

ROXIE [*genuinely surprised*]: *Marry* him? Hell, no!

JAKE: Just a good time on the side, with Goofy in there for a meal-ticket.

ROXIE: Meal-ticket! Say, he couldn't buy my liquor!

SERGEANT: Did this guy know you was married or was you foolin' him, too?

ROXIE [*comes out of closet in a poppy-colored dress and goes to dresser for make-up*]: So was he—a wife and kid!

[*Door at right opens:* AMOS *flings in, wild-eyed, with* HARRISON *following him.*]

HARRISON [*exultant*]: All right, here we are; we've got it at last, Mrs. Hart!

ROXIE [*flings herself about*]: *What?*

AMOS [*in a thick voice*]: So yuh been stringin' me!

HARRISON [*grabs* ROXIE'S *arm*]: *Why* did you kill him?

ROXIE [*gives a frightened glance around, considers*

a dash]: It's a lie! I didn't! Damn you, let go!

[*She sinks her teeth in his wrist—he flings her off with an oath, and she sinks into a chair in hysterical rage.*]

You said you'd stick, you said you'd——

AMOS: Sure, if he's a burglar! What d'yuh lie to me for?

ROXIE [*grinds out through her teeth*]: God damn you!

SERGEANT: So it was *you*.

ROXIE [*rises, hysterical*]: Yes, it was me! I shot him and I'm damned glad I did! I'd do it again——

JAKE: Once is enough, dearie!

ROXIE [*grinds her teeth in rage*]: "Through!" "Done with me!" I showed him, all right. If I don't have him, nobody does! [*Crumples, sobbing.*]

JAKE: I'm sure glad I met you tonight, sweetheart; tomorrow you'll sing another tune.

SERGEANT: Here's my confession—and the whole damn thing to do over again! [*Shakes* ROXIE.] Here, you, get your rags together! [*To* HARRISON.] We'll get her at the station, but let's finish him [*indicating* AMOS] now.

[*He takes* AMOS *to adjoining room;* HARRISON *starts to follow, but* ROXIE *grasps his arm as he passes her.*]

ROXIE [*chattering*]: O God . . . God . . . Don't let 'em hang me—don't. . . . Why, I'd . . . *die!* You promised—if I signed that . . . Can't—can't we—fix this up, you and me . . . fix it up . . . *you* know. . . .

HARRISON [*coldly, with virtuous glance toward* JAKE]: You don't frame anything with me!

[*He shakes her off and goes into the next room.*]

JAKE [*looks down for a moment at* ROXIE, *who has*

burst into hysterical sobs, then speaks in pretended surprise]: Well, for cryin' out loud, did I ever! And what's the matter with *you!*

ROXIE: Matter? [*Half-shrieking.*] Matter? Are yuh crazy? [*Starts pacing up and down madly.*] O God, God, can't yuh *do* somethin'? Can't I get away, can't I——

JAKE [*takes her by shoulders and forces her back into chair*]: Keep your clothes on, kid.

ROXIE [*weeping*]: They will hang me, I know they will. I killed him and——

JAKE: What if yuh did? Ain't this Chicago? And gallant old Cook County never hung a woman yet! As a matter of fact—cold, hard statistics—it's 47 to 1 you'll go free.

ROXIE [*eagerly, as she starts packing her clothes in a suitcase*]: *Free?* How?

JAKE: Sure. Why, you're not even booked yet. But suppose they do, and the coroner's jury holds you, and you're sent to jail——

ROXIE [*shrieking*]: Jail! *Jail!* O God!

JAKE: Save them bedewzlin' tears for the jury, sister: for *jail's* the best beauty treatment in town. You take the rest cure for a couple uh months at the County's expense; you lay off men and booze till when you come to trial yuh look like Miss America. And that's when the big show starts! With you for leading lady! It's a hundred to one they clear you—that's straight goods. But suppose an off-chance *does* happen: your lawyer will appeal and Springfield, [*gnashing his teeth*] *dear* old Springfield! will reverse the decision like *that!* [*snaps his fingers.*] And if they don't, there's always a pardon—and you know our Governor!—God bless him! [*He tilts his chair*

back and smiles at her.] There there you are: a thousand to one—want to bet?

Roxie [*fearfully*]: And you'll . . . *help* me?

Jake: Sure! I'll phone Billy Flynn in the morning. He's the best criminal lawyer in town—next to Halliday. Specializes in women: freed Minnie Kahlstedt, the hammer murderess, Marcelle Wayne, who fed her children arsenic——

Roxie: O yes, I read all about *them!*

Jake: O he's a wonder, and will make it a real fight, for Harrison is an ace on the prosecutor's staff, and believe me, that boy won't leave a stone unturned to put you back of the bars! [*He smiles in satisfaction.*]

Roxie: Well, you needn't be so *pleased,* if you really want me to go free.

Jake [*stares at her*]: *Want* you to go free! How d'yuh get that way! Say, I'd give my last dollar—all three of 'em—and ever' night when I kneel down by my little bed I'll ask God to put a hemp rope around your nice white neck!

[*She shrinks back and he goes on in rapture.*]

O baby, that would mean headlines six inches high—the story of the year! . . . But don't let my prayers worry you, kid, for God's not on the jury. . . . And with a face like yours—for Justice ain't so blind, in Chicago . . .

Roxie [*pleased*]: O do you really think I'm—well——[*Hesitates with coy modesty.*]

Jake: Sure! I'm callin' you "the most beautiful murderess."

Roxie: "Murderess!"

Jake: Of course! What do you *think* I'd say? Prima donna?

Roxie: But you needn't *say* it.

Jake: Well, what the hell put you on front page? [*Impressively.*] Here you're gettin' somethin' money can't buy: front-page advertisin'. Why, a three-line want ad would cost you two eighty-five, and you'll get line after line, column after column, for nothin'. Who knows you now? Nobody. But this time tomorrow your face will be known from coast to coast. Who cares today whether you live or die? But tomorrow they'll be crazy to know your breakfast food and how did yuh rest last night. They'll fight to see you, come by the hundred just for a glimpse of your house——Remember Wanda Stopa? Well, we had twenty thousand at her funeral.

Roxie: I'm not interested in *funerals.*

Jake [*grinning*]: Why, you may even end in wax works! Lord, girl, you're gettin' free publicity a movie queen would *die* for! Why, you'll be famous!

[*The* Sergeant *and* Harrison *come to the door. The former motions to* Roxie *and she goes with him to the adjoining room.* Harrison *enters.*]

O baby, ain't we in luck though! A sweet story, a sweet story!

[Harrison *takes a flask from his pocket and pours two drinks. Solemnly they lift their glasses—the glasses of* Roxie *and the dead man—in toast.*]

Harrison: Here's to Roxie!

Jake [*grinning*]: *Hang* her!

[*They drink and he gives* Harrison *an ecstatic shake.*]

Here I've just been prayin' for a nice, juicy murder—for two weeks now we haven't had nothin' but machine guns and hijackers.

N COUNTY FREE

[*They dump out dresser drawers, searching rapidly for letters, pictures, etc.*]

And this one's got the makin's: wine, woman, jazz, a lover.

HARRISON [*tosses over diary*]: And plenty of dirt! Read 'em and blush.

JAKE [*flicks through it*]: O Roxie, Roxie . . . no mud on *her* shoes! . . . *He* must have been Number Four Sixty-eight!

HARRISON: And I can't bring it out in the trial.

JAKE: Ain't it hell. And me on a decent paper—God, what a waste! But gee, what a chance for you!

HARRISON: Just what I need; something big—sensational—to make me known.

JAKE: You've got it here. Scott will promote you on this.

HARRISON: Promote me—hell! It'll mean I can get out! For five years I've slaved like a dog for "justice and society" at three thousand a year. But now I've got my experience and this time next year I'll be rakin' in the shekels for "humanity and mercy"! That's where the money is: defense.

JAKE [*admiringly, taking notebook*]: Why, you old son-of-a-gun! . . . All right, let's have a quote from the rising young attorney.

HARRISON [*oratorically, kneeling before the debris from dresser*]: You may say: "It's a cold-blooded dastardly crime, for which Assistant State's Attorney Martin S. Harrison will ask the death penalty. . . ." A hanging case and I'm ready to go to the jury tomorrow!

JAKE: Atta boy! But Scott won't let you—not with election this fall! April . . . um . . . he'll hold it till September—say, if he could get a conviction, an

honest-to-God conviction, on a *woman*, why, he'd sweep the city clean!

[*There's a ring at the door.* JAKE *answers while* HARRISON *replaces dresser-drawers. It's the* PHOTOGRAPHER *with his flashlight outfit: another rough and ready young man, with ingratiating smile and steady flow of words.*]

BABE: Hello, Jake. What's it all about?

JAKE [*opens door for* SERGEANT *and* ROXIE]: Hot stuff: she kills him rather than lose him.

BABE [*backs off and blinks his eyes in exaggerated appreciation of* ROXIE]: O my, my! Oi, oi! Ain't she the prize-winner though! [*In pretended severity.*] Keep them r. s. v. p. eyes off of *me*, sister; I'm a married man. [*To* JAKE]. Where's the stiff?

JAKE: Outside—you don't want him.

SERGEANT: Hurry up, boys, we've got to get along.

BABE: Righto. This will make "the home" if we hurry. [*Sets up his camera, takes flashlight powder, etc.*] Any of the other boys been here? . . . Let's see, what'll we have? One of you [*to* HARRISON] and the girl—

SERGEANT: Say, she's *my* prisoner.

BABE [*fixes chairs*]: Both of you, and her in the center.

[HARRISON *and the* SERGEANT *both try for the chair closest the camera.*]

JAKE: What about the husband?

BABE: Is there a husband? Sure, let's have the husband!

[HARRISON *steps to the door to call* AMOS, *and the* SERGEANT *slips into the preferred chair.*]

Better give me the names, Jake.

[*He jots them in a notebook.* HARRISON *returns with* AMOS.]

AMOS: No, we don't. I'll bust his camera for him!

BABE: O you *will*, will you?

AMOS: This don't go in no papers!

BABE: O it *don't*, don't it!

AMOS: No, it don't. I won't let you use my name; this is to be kept quiet.

BABE: Say, shut up! [*To the others.*] Snap into it now: I gotta make a deadline.

AMOS: I won't have My Wife dragged into——

JAKE: Here, you, get this: We're not draggin' your wife—she dragged herself, see? You don't want publicity, but you're goin' to get it anyway. The question is: what kind? Do you want the papers for you or against you? Well, you gotta play ball!

BABE [*to* ROXIE]: You're willin', ain't yuh? [*She hesitates, and he looks astounded.*] Got Mary Pickford skinned a mile and don't want her pitcher in the paper! My God, can yuh beat it! You'll be right along with President Coolidge and Harold McCormick—there ain't a society dame in town but what would jump at the chance! [*He briskly guides her to the center chair.*] Right here now.

AMOS: Don't you do it, Roxie!

ROXIE: O shut up! I guess I will if I want to!

BABE [*at camera*]: That's the time—never let 'em boss you. And brush your hair back. It hides your eyes, and, believe me, you don't want to hide them eyes, does she, Jake?

ROXIE: I really need a marcel.

BABE: They're wearin' 'em straight. Now, Harrison, you and the Lieutenant look at her . . . *that's* right. And you [*to* ROXIE]—what's her name? Roxie?—look at the camera.

[*He holds the powder high: the* SERGEANT *sprawls his hands and* HARRISON *frowns judiciously.*]

A little smile now, Roxie—just a little more. . . . My, my, ain't that perfect, Jake? I'll bet she's the girl on the toothpaste ad!

[*Flash! Bang!* ROXIE *gives a little scream,* JAKE *opens the window to let out the smoke, and the men reluctantly give up their chairs.*]

All right, let's have another: her and the husband.

AMOS: Not *me!* I ain't goin' to have folks sayin'——

JAKE: Want 'em to think you're a yellah dawg and run out on her? Come on here now and show the world you're goin' to stand by her—it'll help her, won't it, Babe?

BABE: Sure! When they see a man like *him*——

AMOS [*yielding*]: Well, uh course anything I can do. . . .

BABE [*arranges them holding hands stiffly*]: *That's* right. . . . You're askin' his forgiveness, and you [*to* AMOS] smile down at her. . . . [*Back at the camera.*] All right, let's go!

[*Flash! Bang!* ROXIE *goes to the mirror and adds a bit more color all around.*]

Now I'd like one with the stiff——

SERGEANT: Say, Gazette, you've got enough!

BABE: One more, Captain, and I'm through! You're here, makin' the arrest, and she's kneelin' by the body. [*With a punch at* JAKE.] Down, Fido, play dead!

JAKE [*flops on floor as suggested*]: Atta boy! I'll use that for my lead!

ROXIE [*takes position as indicated*]: What do I do?

BABE: Cry—no, it's a shame to hide that face.

ROXIE: What about a profile?

BABE: Great!—But only half as good as a front; so yuh'd better look at the camera . . . *that's* right . . . and smile—just a little more—*big!* [*Flash! Bang!*] Done! [*Tosses things together and hurls goodbye.*] See yuh later, Jake!

SERGEANT [*takes* ROXIE *by the arm and turns to* JAKE]: Comin' with us?

JAKE: I'll drive over with Mart—gotta phone the office.

[*The* SERGEANT *and* ROXIE, *followed by* AMOS, *go on out.*]

HARRISON [*stares after them*]: God, if I can only hang that woman!

JAKE: Well, you ain't got the chance of a snowball in hell! Dumb—but beautiful. [*He takes up phone.*] Dearborn O-five hundred. . . .

CURTAIN

ACT ONE

ACT I

Sunday afternoon—two days later. Women's Ward of the Cook County Jail, Chicago.

While the curtain is still down there is heard in heavily accented tones the Salvation Army:

Be not dis*may*ed what *e'er* betide,
God will take *care* of *you;*
Beneath His wond'rous *love* abide,
God will take care of you.

The curtain rises slowly on a large room, flanked on each side [left and right] with tiny white bunk rooms, equipped with cot, wash-stand, and chair. The rear wall is a huge, double iron-screen, at which the prisoners receive their friends and relatives on visiting days; in it [at the extreme left] is a double locked door that opens into the hall around the elevator shaft. There's a small stand-table and a few straight chairs at the right of this door, a long white enamelled table with chairs on either side down the center of the room. A stairway [invisible] at the right [rear] leads up to the women's recreation and lounging room.

ROXIE *sits at the center table. She wears a jade green satin dress, sleeveless; nude hose, decorated with turquoise ribbon garters, and black velvet pumps. She is pale—minus rouge, powder, and lipstick. There is a box of cigarettes by her side and she smokes like mad—straightforward, honest smoking, with appre-*

ciative inhalation now and then. The table is stacked with newspapers, and the floor strewn with discarded sheets.

MRS. MORTON [*the matron, in dark dress with large white apron*] *sits across from her with scissors, ready to clip any bit* ROXIE *designates. She's a stalwart woman of fifty or so, with iron-gray hair, dark eyes with flabby lids, ruddy complexion, and weak mouth.*

Another woman lounges in a low rocker—a dark, quiet woman in the late thirties, with smooth sallowed features, large dreamy eyes, and full lips that have a dipsomaniacal droop. She moves with studied languor and her voice is soft and low. She wears a heavy dull crepe dress and topaz earrings that match a certain tawny gleam in her smouldering eyes. She is engrossed in the Society sheet while ROXIE *pores over the News sections.*

The voices of the singers [*several rooms away*] *ring out fresh and clear, with a syncopation jazz can't touch:*

> *God* will take *ca-are* of *you*
> Through *all* the *day*
> O'er *all* the *way*,
> He *will* take *ca-are* of *you*
> *God* will take *ca-are* of *you!*

ROXIE [*casually, as she hands* MRS. MORTON *another paper to clip*]: Then yesterday must have been His day off.

MATRON [*puzzled*]: What?

ROXIE: I just said God wasn't on the job at the inquest or I wouldn't have landed here.

[*The music starts up again.*]

Say, does that keep up all day?

MATRON: Just an hour or so. It's the Salvation Army—the men likes to hear 'em. I'll have 'em close the doors. [*Gets up and goes to the door.*]

ROXIE: With them squawkin', and the radio upstairs tunin' in to Y.M. meetin's, health talks and sermons. . . . [*As* MATRON *is out of earshot.*] This is a helluva joint: Sunday here and not a drop uh liquor in the house!

VELMA [*looks up in ready sympathy*]: That's the hardest thing to get used to. [*Gives a little shiver and takes another cigarette.*] Smoking helps *some.*

ROXIE [*as* MATRON *returns*]: Look—*look!* [*Gives a squeal of delight and points to page.*] A whole page of pictures! [*Awed.*] Why, it's just like I was President or somethin': "Beautiful Roxie Hart, the Jazz-Slayer"; "Roxie and Her Attorney"; "Roxie and Her Husband"—[*Gives a gasp of surprise.*] For the love uh—! *My Diary!* "The Little Book to Which She Told Her Secrets"—can yuh beat it! . . . "Only you and I, Diary, know how much we love him. . . ." *Say,* who do you s'pose wrote that stuff? You oughta see the *real* one!

VELMA [*darkly*]: They've got it all right. No sense of —honor, reporters. Broke into my apartment the night I—left, and stole a whole suit-case of letters—*valuable* letters—letters from men who have loved me. . . . [*She is overcome with emotion.*]

ROXIE: And a "Diagram of the Apartment"—my God! See the spot marked X. [*Points with satisfaction.*] That's where he fell—the dirty piker!

MATRON [*reprovingly.*]: Ssh, dearie! Mustn't talk like that. [*To* VELMA.] She ain't seen her lawyer yet.

ROXIE: Well, he *was*. [*Scornfully.*] One uh these wise guys that wants to be a Daddy on sixty a week and keep up a family on the side! But I called him all right!

MATRON: I know. . . . [*Virtuously.*] I never hear of a man's bein' killed but I know he got *just* what was comin' to him. . . . But you mustn't *say* it.

VELMA: What's your defense?

ROXIE [*shrilly*]: Defense? D'yuh think I'd let a guy hold out on me like that?

MATRON: But yuh can't tell the jury that!

ROXIE: O *can't* I!

VELMA: It's just like divorce: the *reason* don't count—it's the grounds.

ROXIE: Well, if that ain't grounds——

MATRON: But it's got to be accordin' to law, dearie: like he threatened or attackted you or somethin'.

ROXIE [*to* VELMA]: What's yours?

VELMA: Mine? Why, I didn't *do* it.

ROXIE: Then who did? There was just you and him in the room!

VELMA: I'm sure I don't know. I was drunk, my dear, dead drunk. Passed out completely and remember nothing from the time we left the café till the officers found me washing the blood from my hands. But I'm sure I didn't do it. . . . Why, I've the tenderest heart in the world, *haven't* I, Mrs. Morton?

MATRON: O she has indeed!

VELMA: And wouldn't hurt a worm. . . . [*Tremolo.*] Not even a *worm*. . . .

ROXIE: Is bein' drunk "grounds"?

MATRON: Now don't you worry, dearie, Billy Flynn will take care of all that.

ROXIE: He's comin' this afternoon.

MATRON [*wisely*]: He'll fix you up all right—they don't make 'em any smarter than Billy. What he don't know about juries and women——!

[*A roll of her eyes intimates that the Britannica is a tyro.*]

He's the best in the city.

VELMA: Except Mr. Hessler.

MATRON [*hastily*]: Criminal lawyers, I mean.

ROXIE [*quickly, to* VELMA]: Ain't yours criminal?

VELMA: O dear, no—he's doing this *just* for me. Divorce is his line. He's handled *all* of my cases—my family attorney. [*Lifts brows languidly.*] *Very* exclusive.

ROXIE [*to* MATRON]: Is mine exclusive?

VELMA [*laughs scornfully*]: *Billy?*

MATRON [*hastily*]: Yes—in his way—yes. And he'll give you a pretty trial.

ROXIE: Well, he ought to—for five thousand dollars.

MATRON: My, that's a lot of money—but it's worth it. A cheap one could do it all right—why, with *your* looks you don't need a lawyer at *all!* But it's a satisfaction to know it'll be done *right!* That's what I said when I buried my husband.

ROXIE [*expectantly*]: Did you kill your——?

MATRON: Suicide it was. . . . I went in debt, but I had all the trimmin's. . . . Never skimp on a funeral or a trial—especially a murder trial. Do it *right.* [*Finishes clipping and counts the columns.*] There! Five . . . eight . . . twelve . . . seventeen columns and twenty-three pictures—besides all them they got this mornin'!

ROXIE [*takes one and reads with pleasure*]: "Roxie Hart, the prettiest woman ever charged with murder in Cook County, was held to the Grand Jury. . . ." Ummm . . . [*runs on down column*] . . . "smiled

and cast coquettish glances from pansy eyes half hid by her purple turban"— [*Breaks off in anger.*] Can yuh beat it! I never wore a turban in my life! [*To* VELMA.] Why, I'd look as old as *you!*

VELMA [*affably*]: Yes; you gotta have chick for a turban.

[ROXIE *glares but has no answer.*]

MATRON: They're awful dumb, reporters. Never get anything right.

ROXIE [*continues reading*]: . . . "beige hose topped with turquoise garters"—say, they don't miss a trick!

MATRON: Garters! What next!

ROXIE: . . . "and rouged knees that warned Ann Pennington to look to her laurels."

VELMA: Well, it's the last rouge they'll see for some time.

ROXIE: Thank heavens, *I* can stand it, but it must be hard on people who're old or sallow. What's the big idea, anyway, shuttin' down on make-up?

MATRON [*apologetically*]: It's the rules, dearie, I don't know why. But you'll get it for the trial, all right. . . . O my, it's goin' to be a real pleasure to do *you!*

ROXIE [*takes up another clipping*]: "The wife of the dead man sat with bowed head during the inquest. . . ." Say, you oughta see her! And the clothes she wore! They'd oughta run our pictures together and call it "Why Men Leave Home." She must be all of forty, and fat. Men like 'em round but not fat. No pep, no life, while I'm always rarin' to go!

[*Continues reading.*] "But the jazz slayer showed neither grief nor remorse; powdered her nose and registered calm amusement——"

VELMA [*bitterly*]: You oughta cried and took on a lot. They razzed me the same way.

MATRON: Well, it's only the papers, and the jury's all *you* care about.

VELMA: And thank God they're *men!*

ROXIE [*flings down the clippings and springs up in rage*]: The nasty little cat on the *Ledger!* Calls me knock-kneed! I'll scratch her eyes out!

MATRON [*in alarm*]: O dearie, you mustn't get 'em down on you. Treat 'em nice and——

ROXIE: Well, they can't print lies about *me!*

VELMA: O can't they! If you think *you've* had a raw deal—tell her, Mrs. Morton.

MATRON: It's terrible, the things they wrote.

VELMA: Made fun of my jewels, yes, they did! Said my diamonds sparkled like real. *Like* real! An honest-to-God three-carat from my second husband —Mr. Phaley, you know him, the clothes manufacturer. And my emerald and platinum bracelet—a divorce present from my first. And my pearls—my real Japanese pearls . . .

MATRON: And your coat—don't forget your coat, Velma.

VELMA: A genuine Eastern mink, mind you, and they called it weasel! It was his—Mr. Clapp's—last gift to me before he—er—passed away.

ROXIE [*bewildered*]: Your husband?

VELMA: Such a generous man! Wonderful to me—more like a friend than a husband. That very night, just before he—went to his reward, he offered me two hundred a week alimony. I had just started my divorce, you know— O my dear, didn't you see that? All the papers had it, with pictures of me and everything. . . . And I said to him, "No, Clarence,

you're too generous—I won't take it." Quite firmly I said it. "A hundred, yes, or maybe a hundred fifty; and not over one seventy-five at the most." [*Triumphantly.*] Now in the face of that, is it likely I'd —do what they said I did? Would I trade an offer like that for a measly ten thousand insurance?—Cigarette?

[Roxie *holds up an empty box and* Velma *goes to the stairs.*]

Matron [*indignantly*]: Which the company won't pay. Think of them holdin' out on her like that! O what women suffers from men!

Roxie: But she *must* have killed him, for the papers all said——

Matron [*severely*]: Now listen, dearie, if you're goin' to believe what the papers say, you'll be suspicious of ever'body here—includin' yourself. You'll get along better if you just forget all that and take each one as they come—that's my motto. . . . And as for Velma, she's a pleasure to have around. No fightin', no ugly language, refined and genteel—a real lady if I ever saw one. And classy—all the papers say she's the dressiest one we've ever had.

Roxie: She don't look like a sheba to me. She must be forty, and dark and skinny. Men like 'em slim but not skinny.

Matron [*with quick diplomacy*]: Well, of course she ain't got *your* looks— O my, no! But she *is* a lady: uses black narcissus perfume and never makes her bed.

Roxie [*with a regretful glance at her bunk*]: I thought you *had* to!

Matron: She hires Lucia——

Roxie: Who's Lucia?

[Velma *returns with cigarettes.*]

Matron: That Eyetalian woman——

Roxie: —who chopped her husband's head off while the star boarder held him down?

Velma: And she wasn't even drunk, my dear—not a drop!

Matron [*reproachfully*]: Now, dearie, you mustn't be narrow-minded! [*In explanation to* Roxie.] She's waitin' a new trial. They gave her fourteen years, but there's somethin' wrong with the indictment or other . . . Anyhow, here she is, and she does Velma's laundry——

Roxie: I'll get her, too. And I won't make my bed, *either*. I'm just as good as——

Matron [*hastily*]: Sure you are—both of you.

Velma [*languidly*]: I've always had everything done for me. . . .

Roxie [*recklessly*]: So have I! Ever'thing! A maid to bring in my breakfast——

Velma: Really . . .

Roxie: O yes, breakfast in bed *every* morning.

Matron: Well, yuh gotta get up for your breakfast—that's rules—but yuh *can* have it brought in, from Wooster's just around the corner. Anything yuh want, only twenty dollars a week. And we'll all three eat together!

[*Song is heard again as the Army conducts its lively questionnaire:*

"Are your garments spotless?
Are they white as snow?
Are you washed in the blood of the Lamb?"

[*There appears at the end of the corridor, with scrubbing-brush and bucket, a small wiry woman*

of forty or so, with a straggly mop of hair that is the weird color left by many peroxides. Her eyes are a washed-out blue, with now and then a wild, fanatic gleam. Her mouth is broad, filled with a fascinating mixture of natural and artificial teeth. There are deep wrinkles—almost cuts—around her mouth and eyes. She puts down her bucket and stands surveying the women. Suddenly she bursts into wild shrieks of mirthless, uncontagious laughter. Shriek!—she bends double; shriek!—she advances toward them.]

LIZ [*gasp*]: O it's so funny! So funny!

MATRON: She's off again. Now, Liz——

LIZ [*gives* MATRON *a reassuring little pat*]: O no, I'm not, don't you worry now. [*To others.*] But it's just so *funny*. [*Starts again on a wild spasm of laughter.*]

MATRON: Hush! or I'll tell God on you.

LIZ [*subsides instantly*]: Aw, you wouldn't do that, would you, Mrs. Morton? 'Cause it *is* funny.

ROXIE: What's funny?

LIZ: The three of us: you, her [*she points a skinny, eczemaed hand toward* VELMA] and me all here together. They call you the prettiest, her the stylishest, and me the queer one—we all got our tags, so folks will know us. We've come different roads: mine's a long and hard one—it might have been different once—just once—but I went into a Far Country. . . . [*Goes on in the sing-song call of the revivalist.*] O God, O God, O God! . . . [*To* VELMA.] Yours might have, too. Several times you could have turned off, but dancing feet find sorrow. [*To* ROXIE.] But you just took a short cut, that's all.

ROXIE: What are yuh talkin' about?

MATRON: She's off, don't mind her. Go on away, Liz.

LIZ: She thinks I'm crazy. I am sometimes, but when I ain't [*her eyes flash triumphantly*] I got more sense 'an any of you. And right now, I *ain't*. I'm God's Messenger, that's what I am.

MATRON: O my—she's awful when she starts on that.

LIZ [*gaily*]: An' here we are now, the three of us! [*To* VELMA.] You killed your husband for his insurance, [*to* ROXIE] and you put a bullet in your lover when he got tired of you——

ROXIE: That's a lie, you dirty——

MATRON: Don't argue—it just makes her worse.

LIZ: And I shot Jim . . . because he—[*her voice sinks to a hoarse whisper*]—*laughed.*

VELMA: Because he wouldn't *marry* you.

LIZ [*decidedly, alert again*]: Nope. I'd asked him lots of times—we'd been livin' in sin for seven years . . . years of the locust . . . but this time he *laughed*. [*Quietly.*] And I shot him. There was a candle sittin' on the floor—you know the Good Book says not to hide your light under a bushel—and he fell *right* by it. And I knelt beside him and prayed. . . .

MATRON: Look out for them that's allus readin' the Bible and prayin'. Somethin's wrong *some* place.

LIZ [*back in the revivalist character again*]: And here we are, stained with the blood that only the Lamb of God can cleanse: murderesses . . . murderesses!

VELMA: Shut up, you fool! You're not—*that*, unless you're *convicted*.

LIZ: O yes, you are! It don't take no trial. I was a murderess the minute Jim fell. God judged me then, right then. I can see Him now . . . [*her eyes grow glassy, and her voice is shrill in horror*] sittin'

there on His throne . . . [*Gives a wild shriek.*]

MATRON [*rises and takes her by the arm*]: Come on, now, that's enough out of you. Upstairs now—go 'long! [*Takes her shrieking to the stairs.*]

ROXIE: Well, that's a cheerful little playmate. What's *her* defense?

VELMA: Insanity.

ROXIE: Is bein' *crazy* "grounds"?

VELMA [*nods*]: But it may mean the asylum . . . and besides, it's so embarrassing——

MATRON [*returns with pack of cards from table*]: Thank God, there ain't many like her! . . . Well, girls, what about a hand? [*To* ROXIE.] Are you good at bridge?

ROXIE: Better at poker.

MATRON: O no, dearie, bridge is all we play—penny a point.

[*The bell rings, and she goes to answer.*]

VELMA: She always wins.

ROXIE: From you, maybe; but watch little Roxie, the girl gambler.

VELMA: All right; but I warned you.

ROXIE: *Warned* me? . . . Oh! You mean I've got to *let* her win?

VELMA: Suit yourself.

ROXIE: Well, I'll be damned.

MATRON [*calls from door*]: It's your husband, Mrs. Hart.

ROXIE [*springs up*]: Did he bring my clothes? [*Reaches for the battered suit-case the* MATRON *holds.*]

MATRON: I have to look at 'em first, to be sure there's nothin' concealed. [*Returns to table, followed by* ROXIE.] Ain't yuh goin' to talk to him? [ROXIE *looks blank.*] There at the screen.

VELMA [*bitterly, to* ROXIE]: That's your reception room: you play peek-a-boo through the bars.

ROXIE [*to* MATRON, *who's inspecting the clothes*]: Leave out the purple bengaline if—[*goes to screen.*] Amos, did you bring the purple bengaline?

[*Evidently he answers, but the words are undistinguishable.*]

My God! Can't you do nothin' right? . . . Terrible! . . . Locked up all night in one of them sardine boxes. . . . And I have to wash in cold water! . . . What the hell are *you* walkin' the floor about? You got it easy, while I'm locked up here with God's Messenger!

[*There's a flash and explosion outside: the* CAMERAMEN *have their picture of* AMOS *at the screen.*]

MATRON [*hurries to the door*]: It's them blame photographers!

[ROXIE *and* VELMA *preen for pictures.*]

Now, boys, none uh that!

BABE [*outside*]: Hello, Mrs. Morton! I got my ticket, all right!

MATRON [*nods toward* AMOS]: But not him. It's against the rules—you know that, Mr. Maloney: relatives is never allowed inside.

BABE: But just for a little pitcher? Have a heart, Mrs. Morton! Just this once—the first day, you know—with you here beside 'em——

[MATRON *opens the door, and* BABE *enters, followed by* AMOS.]

Come on, Obadiah! What—Amos? All right, Amos.

[VELMA *goes upstairs at a nod from* MATRON; BABE *blows* ROXIE *a kiss and starts to set up*

camera; AMOS *makes a dash for* ROXIE, *who starts to match his ardor but sees the camera is not quite ready.*]

AMOS: Roxie! My wife!

BABE: Wait a minute, wait a minute!

AMOS: How do they treat you? By God, just remember this: [*strides up and down, glaring fiercely*] I ain't gonna have my wife——

MATRON [*dangles keys*]: Looky here, young man, out you *go!*

BABE: Don't mind him—they dropped him when he's a baby. [*To* AMOS.] Keep your clothes on, Habbakuk. She's sittin' pretty and havin' the time of her young life, all for nothin'.

ROXIE: For nothin'! Say, boy, you've been readin' the wrong ticker!

BABE: Now: hold 'em again, Hart! As you were!

[AMOS *and* ROXIE *resume stiff embrace.*]

That's right. Face the camera, and smile, just a little smile . . .

[*Flash! Bang!*]

Now you here at the table. [*Clears it of papers.*] Ain't you the lucky girl, though, with all these pitchers! And you can thank your stars you're in Chicago where the poor workin' girl's got a chance. In New York now, yuh gotta be a millionaire to make front page. You could shoot up the whole town and nobody gives a damn unless you're in the Social Register!

[ROXIE *flounces down on top of the table, crossing her feet.*]

That's right: we want them million-dollar knees! More——

[*She lifts skirt.*]

Just a little more!

[*Flash! Bang!*]

Done! [*Gathers up equipment.*] And I won't see you no more, sister, till the Judgment Day! S'long!

[MATRON *lets him out.*]

ROXIE [*at table with* AMOS]: All right then, I'll eat with the wops and niggers!

AMOS [*thundering*]: No, you don't! My wife'll have the best there is! Twenty a week—hell, what's that! I got a raise—fifty-five now.

ROXIE: My God!

AMOS: Sure, the boss has been swell to me: offered me a week's vacation, and when I got back from the inquest the whole office crowded around, and shook hands with me, and wished me luck.

ROXIE: Well, it's just because you're my husband. You'd be nobody if it wasn't for me!

AMOS [*indignantly*]: It's because I'm sticking *by* you. I guess there's not many guys would do it.

ROXIE: Well, whatever it is, you got a raise out of it, didn't you? And I've *got* to have money, for laundry and makin' beds, and cigarettes,—and you know how a penny a point counts up!

AMOS: Say, looky here!

ROXIE [*shrilly*]: Do you want me to look like a cheap skate before all these people? All right, all right. There's plenty of money in the world, you know, and you ain't got no corner on it. God, why did I ever marry you!

AMOS [*takes out wallet and begins counting bills*]: Will ten do?

ROXIE: Yes—twenty! [*Gives a generous grab for the money.*]

AMOS [*in alarm*]: Yeah, but what about *me?*

ROXIE: My God, can't yuh think uh nothin' but yourself?

[*The bell rings and there is heard outside a rich voice, hypnotic in its suggestive power, with a minor undertone that's Gaelic:* "Well, well, Mrs. Morton!"]

[*He enters—our hero, counsel for the defense,* BILLY FLYNN. *He's a little man, like Napoleon, and he carries himself with the Corporal's air. A magnificent iron-gray mane, with a forelock he tugs at to convey the impression of thought, or tosses back now and then to reveal the Cæsarian brow. The eyes are deep-set and keen; the nose starts out to be Semitic, but ends with an Irish tilt; the mouth is broad without being generous, and the jaw is pugilistic.*

[*He is dressed with careful carelessness: tweed topcoat and fedora, pepper and salt sack-suit, blue shirt with soft collar, and striped necktie with golden horseshoe. He buys on Michigan Boulevard, but follows the style of West Chicago. A millionaire would know his tailor, but a bricklayer would feel comfortably that his Sunday clothes beat Billy's.*]

MATRON [*in note of tragedy*]: Oh, Mr. Flynn, the photographer's just gone!

FLYNN: That's all right: he got me downstairs.

MATRON: The husband's here, too.

FLYNN: Good! *Just* the man I want to see!

[*She goes down the corridor at the left, and he stalks by* ROXIE *without a word or look, straight to her husband.*]

Well, Hart? [AMOS *turns.*] And what about me?

AMOS [*grandly*]: Have a chair.

FLYNN [*ignores invitation and repeats*]: What about me?

AMOS: I—I didn't do quite as well as I hoped.

FLYNN: No?

AMOS: But I will, all right, I will. [*Takes certificates, books, etc., from pocket.*] Here's five hundred on my insurance.

ROXIE [*shrilly*]: Cashin' your insurance? Not much you don't! That's mine!

[FLYNN's *hand reaches it first.*]

FLYNN: That makes a thousand.

AMOS: Yes, sir. And three hundred that I borrowed—[*gives it to* FLYNN] and seven hundred out of the building and loan——

FLYNN: Two thousand.

AMOS: And—and that's all I've got—*so far.*

FLYNN [*watching him keenly*]: What about her father?

AMOS: I phoned him yesterday—long distance—and—he'll probably raise some later.

FLYNN [*bites his cigar and snaps out his words with an "ugly" look*]: You damned liar! I phoned him, too, last night . . . And he told me just what he told *you:* that she went to hell six years ago and she could stay there forever before he'd spend one cent to get her out!

ROXIE [*to* AMOS]: I told yuh not to try him.

FLYNN: Now I don't give a damn where you get the money—that's your problem. Beg it, borrow it—any way. . . .

AMOS: I'll pay you twenty a week——

ROXIE: And where do *I* come in, you big stiff? What about *me?*

FLYNN: Shut up, you ——!

[ROXIE *subsides.*]

AMOS: I'll give you notes with interest—double—till ever' cent——

FLYNN: No, you don't. None uh that installment stuff. I wouldn't be *bothered* with your chicken-feed. I play square, Hart, dead square. When you came to me yesterday I didn't say, "Is she innocent, is she guilty, will it be an easy case or a hard one?" *Nothing* like that, now *did* I! No. I said: "Have you got five thousand dollars?" And you said, "Yes." [*Eyes him in contempt.*] You dirty liar! . . . And I took your case—and I'll *keep* it. But she'll rot in jail before I bring it to trial!

ROXIE [*angrily, to* AMOS]: See what you've done, you big——

AMOS [*trying to be nonchalant*]: You needn't worry about your money—you'll get it all right.

FLYNN [*in well-simulated rage*]: Get out! Get *out!* And don't come near me again till you've got three thousand in your fist!

AMOS: Well—so long, Roxie. [*Starts to kiss her but she pushes him away.*]

ROXIE: Can the soft stuff.

AMOS: See you Thursday.

ROXIE: And don't forget my dinner *now*—from Woosters' p.d.q.!

[AMOS *goes slowly, and she softens her tone as she turns to the lawyer.*]

Listen: you didn't mean what you said about delayin' my case, did yuh?

[FLYNN *takes a cigar and doesn't answer.*]

Couldn't—*I*—pay you?

FLYNN [*unconcerned*]: That depends on your bank account.

ROXIE [*softly, laying her hand on his arm*]: I mean—couldn't we be—*friends?*

FLYNN [*vigorously*]: Good! You've got that out of your system. Now listen: I'm not interested in your looks, your age, your sex—nothing *except* as it affects the case. You mean just one thing to me: five thousand dollars. Get that.

ROXIE [*takes the slap philosophically, lights a cigarette, reseats herself on the table*]: Suit yourself. But if you change your mind . . .

FLYNN: Forget it. [*Draws up chair and goes on in business-like tone.*] Now: that sob sister from the *Evening Star* is coming.

ROXIE: Mary Sunshine?

FLYNN: And the woman from the *Ledger.*

ROXIE: I won't see her.

FLYNN: You've talked so much, you can't stop now. [*Grimly.*] If you tell enough lies they're bound to forget a few!

ROXIE: But not *her*—I'll be damned if I do!

FLYNN [*pleasantly*]: You'll be hanged if you don't. . . . And by the way, pipe down on that swearing. What we've got to do now is go out for sympathy through the press. The story of your life starts tomorrow in the *Star:* "From Convent to Jail."

ROXIE: *What?*

FLYNN: My secretary's writing it this afternoon—signed with your name, of course.

ROXIE: Gee, an authoress!

FLYNN: Beautiful Southern home, every luxury and refinement, [*she listens with interest*] parents dead, educated at the Sacred Heart, fortune swept away, runaway marriage . . . [*Severely.*] You're a lovely,

innocent child bewildered by what has happened. Young, full of life, lonely, you were caught up by the mad whirl of a great city—she gives a red-hot picture of cabaret life—that jazz stuff is always good. . . . And you were drawn inevitably like a moth to the flame! [ROXIE *drinks it in open-mouthed.*] And now the mad whirl has ceased: a butterfly crushed on the wheel. . . . And you sob with remorse for the life you have taken——

ROXIE: O God!

FLYNN: Cut out "God"—stay where you're better acquainted. . . . And don't overdo it. Go as far as you like with Mary Sunshine—she'll swallow hook, line, and sinker, for it's what *she* wants, but easy with the *Ledger* woman. The important thing is *regret*. You're *sorry—sorry:* you'd give your life gladly to bring him back.

ROXIE [*drops pose*]: Say, why did I do it? What's my defense? Was I drunk or crazy?

FLYNN [*shakes head*]: Nobody cares about a lunatic unless they've got money. Whenever they ask "why," all you remember is a fearful quarrel, he threatened to kill you. You can see him coming toward you with that awful look in his eyes—that *wild* look! And—get this now: you *both* grabbed for the gun. See? Self-defense. Whatever else we weave in afterwards, *that's* there from the start. . . . You've spent a sleepless night—tossing about——

ROXIE: Walking the floor——

[*The bell rings and* FLYNN *looks down the corridor.*]

FLYNN: Here's Sunshine now. [*With look of dismay at* ROXIE'S *brilliant garb.*] O my God, that dress!

ROXIE [*resentfully*]: What's the matter with it?

FLYNN: You ought to have something simple—plain—dark.

ROXIE: Wait a minute! [*Dashes to suit-case and waves a black dress at him.*] How's this?

FLYNN [*nods*]: And slick down your hair. [*As she starts off.*] And don't forget: regret, remorse——

ROXIE: I got you! "And we both grabbed for the gun!"

[*She runs lightly upstairs with the dress clasped in her arms, as the* MATRON *admits* MARY SUNSHINE, *who is really Pollyanna's older sister. She is a soulful semi-blonde with protruding front teeth and adenoids, who talks with a slightly affected lisp and boundless enthusiasm.*]

FLYNN [*holds out a hand but doesn't rise*]: Well, here she is: Sunshine herself. Nice little story you had last night.

SUNSHINE: Isn't this *wonderful!* You're *just* the person I want to see! How *is* she today?

FLYNN [*shakes his head gravely*]: Terrible strain, terrible; but she's a brave little woman.

SUNSHINE: O I feel so *sorry* for her when I think of all she must have gone through to be driven to a step like that.

FLYNN: Only a woman can understand.

SUNSHINE: But she has everyone's sympathy—that will help her in this awful hour. [*Fumbles in bag and brings out a handful of telegrams and letters.*] We're paying ten dollars a day for the best letter, you know, and some of these are just too lovely. I cried and cried over this one. [*Hands him letter on pink paper with purple ink.*]

FLYNN [*reads gravely, quoting line now and then*]: . . . "the old heart-breaking story . . ." . . . "there but for the grace of God go I . . ." . . .

"and the woman always pays." . . . True. True.

SUNSHINE: And here's one that's just darling: from five college boys, and they clubbed together and sent her a huge box of roses and lilies. Isn't that sweet? It's too bad they won't let her have flowers—there are eight boxes downstairs now!

MATRON [*comes in from corridor followed by* JAKE]: Just run on up, Miss Sunshine.

SUNSHINE: O *may* I? [*Goes on upstairs.*]

JAKE [*waves friendly salute to* FLYNN, *and smiles cynically after* SUNSHINE]: Little Sunshine gathering tears!

FLYNN: Nice little story this morning, Jake.

JAKE [*pulls up chair*]: Used your name six times!

FLYNN [*takes flask and pours drink*]: Yeah—nice little story.

JAKE [*drinks*]: Anything new?

FLYNN [*shakes head*]: Indictment tomorrow, of course. [*Drinks.*]

JAKE: Bail?

FLYNN: *Bail?* Hell, no! They ain't even got money for *me!* A fine case you got me!

JAKE [*grins*]: Well, charge it up to publicity—you'll get enough.

FLYNN: O no, Henry. I like to see my name in print all right, but it don't take the place of the little old dollar: *cash* in *advance.* And so far this guy hasn't scraped up but two thousand.

JAKE: *Say!* Why not a sale?

FLYNN: Sale?

JAKE: Sure—an auction. They got four rooms of junk.

FLYNN: Second-hand furniture don't bring enough to——

JAKE: But look whose it is! You should have seen 'em

at Maldoon's! Furniture, books, clothes, everything at triple prices. And *he* was nothin' but a get-rich-quick fake—another Ponzi, while this girl is Chicago's latest slayer—or was the last time I phoned the office.

FLYNN [*thoughtfully*]: That's not a bad idea.

JAKE [*indignantly*]: It's the best little idea on La Salle Street! *IF* her stuff's paid for. Call her down.

FLYNN [*bellows at foot of stair*]: Mrs. Hart! Roxie!

JAKE: Why, they'll go *wild* at the chance to own a teacup drank out of by a real live murderess—and of course if she dies by due process of law, the value is enhanced! We could use a carload of underwear! And victrola records—I'll kill a chicken over 'em—think of owning the record she played while the Boy Friend lay dying! [*Slaps* FLYNN *on the back.*] Great stuff, Billy, great stuff!

FLYNN: Go to it, kid, if you can raise my three thousand.

[ROXIE *enters. She wears a black dress, yes, but sleeveless with huge scarlet flower on one shoulder and hula-hula skirt of red fringe. Her hair, glistening from a wet brush, lies smooth like a medieval saint's, and she turns sad eyes from* FLYNN *to* JAKE.]

JAKE [*excitedly*]: Say, is it paid for—your furniture?

ROXIE [*drops the sad pose and flops into a chair*]: My God, are they comin' *here!* Tell 'em they got the wrong party, that I'm out, that—that— [*Gives up.*] Can you beat it! No respect for grief at all.

JAKE: O hell!

ROXIE: I used to hang crepe on the door, but it never worked more'n once.

JAKE [*rallies, to* FLYNN]: O well—what's a few

hundred! [*To* Roxie.] Listen, kid: we're goin' to have an auction and sell off your things.

Roxie [*sits up*]: Like *hell* you are!

Flynn [*coolly*]: Like hell we *are!*

Roxie: Well, there's not enough to pay you, even if— [*Hastily.*] My things are grand, *perfectly grand*, but you'd never get what I paid for 'em.

Jake [*solemnly*]: Five times as much!

[*She stares; he takes auctioneer's stand and holds up imaginary articles.*]

The mirror of Marie Antoinette . . . Carrie Nation's hatchet . . . the bed of Roxie Hart . . . why, they're museum pieces, my dear!

Roxie [*squirms with delight*]: Museum pieces, O gee!

Jake: Sure: you're famous! Why, the rubberneck busses are already cryin': "Half a block to your left is the home of Roxie Hart, the beautiful jazz-slayer!"

Roxie [*genuinely impressed*]: My God . . . tell my husband that, won't you? He thinks it's *him*.

Jake: And they're tearin' up the shrubbery for souvenirs.

Roxie [*with animation*]: There's a lot uh poker chips and cards that'd be cute for that. And little ash-trays —that we used that night . . .

Jake [*nodding*]: His last ashes.

Roxie [*gives a little cry*]: Oh! And all my dresser things!

Jake: O Lord, yes! There's a fortune there!

Roxie: The crystal bottles and atomizer——

Jake [*holds aloft*]: "The mystic perfume that lured young Casely from his home—what am I offered? Twenty—thirty—the magic scent"——

Roxie: I always use black narcissus. . . . And my

jewels: An honest-to-God three carat, and a diamond and platinum bracelet and pearls—real Japanese pearls——

Flynn [*alert, to* Jake]: We'd better keep them out.

Jake [*nods*]: And passing on to the wearing apparel. . . .

Roxie [*firmly*]: Wait. If I sell my clothes——

Flynn: And you're going to.

Roxie: The first five hundred dollars goes to buy more.

Flynn: *After* my fee.

Jake: *After* the furniture people.

Roxie: After *nothin'*. It's *my* clothes and it's 'cause I wore 'em that they're museum pieces. The *first* five hundred. My God, do you think I'm a Kewpie?

Flynn: You *will* need a different get-up for the trial.

Roxie: There's a winter coat with caracul fur——

Jake: To hell with your winter coat: how much underwear have you got?

Roxie [*beams*]: Oh, there's a closet *full* of them! Rose with fur all around it, and a green georgette, and the blue—you know: the one I wore the night [*with triumphant look at* Flynn] "we both grabbed for the gun!"

Jake [*regretfully*]: Unfortunately the blue is State's Exhibit B.

Roxie: And dozens and dozens of— [*Scurries to the suit-case.*] Here, take these, too! [*Lays a few garments aside, then tosses rest back in case.*] Take 'em all and bring me some new ones *quick!* [*Pauses, gives herself a reflective wriggle, then stoops and swiftly removes her garters.*]

Jake [*waves them aloft*]: Bravo! "You've read about 'em, boys, here they are: what am I offered for the Famous Turquoise Garters?" [*Breaks off in alarm as*

she seems bent on further disapparelment.] Stop! This is *not* strip poker!

ROXIE [*straightens with dignity*]: I was only *rollin'* my stockin's. [*They drop to her ankles and* JAKE *retreats.*]

FLYNN [*with look toward stair*]: Sunshine's coming!

JAKE [*hastily grabs suit-case*]: Remember, kid: this is *my* story!

ROXIE [*nods*]: The first five hundred!

[*She sits at table rolling hose as they leave and* SUNSHINE *comes down the stairs.*]

SUNSHINE [*flutters in, pauses a moment at sight of the curiously bent figure—rolling hose—then goes to her*]: My dear, O my dear, what *is* it?

ROXIE [*lifts sweet tragic face*]: I've given all—all that a woman can give . . .

SUNSHINE [*grabs notebook*]: Yes—yes: you've given your all . . .

ROXIE: And now the mad whirl is over—a butterfly crushed on the wheel—*you* know: a butterfly . . . moth and the flame . . . [*with that lovely wistful smile.*]

SUNSHINE [*scribbles*]: And what caused you to——

ROXIE [*sadly, with* LIZ' *mystic intonation*]: It might have been different once . . . but dancing feet find sorrow . . .

SUNSHINE: "Dancing." Er—jazz? The Charleston? Shall we say the Charleston, Mrs. Hart? And er—drink—you *had* been drinking?

ROXIE [*with* VELMA's *ease*]: O yes, I was drunk, my dear, dead drunk!

SUNSHINE: O lovely, lovely—my paper's dry, you know! . . . So you would advise girls to avoid jazz and drink. What else, Mrs. Hart? How did you happen to . . . just *why* did you . . . shoot . . .

ROXIE [*grows dramatic*]: I was mad—crazy—insane!

SUNSHINE: O dear!

ROXIE [*hastily*]: Not enough for the asylum, you know—over with right away.

SUNSHINE [*nods*]: Temporary insanity.

ROXIE: For I really have the tenderest heart in the world—wouldn't hurt a worm . . . not even [*with* VELMA's *tremolo*] a worm. . . .

SUNSHINE [*sympathetically*]: And what brought it on?

ROXIE [*her eyes grow dark and her emotion rises*]: He—he threatened my life. . . .

SUNSHINE: What a terrible man!

ROXIE: O he *was! Very terrible!*

MATRON [*enters with two monstrous baskets, one tied with pink ribbon, which she places on the table and examines*]: It's your supper—two of 'em.

ROXIE [*looks blank*]: *Two?*

MATRON: One from Woosters' and a fancy chicken dinner from *some*place, with a note.

ROXIE [*opens and reads*]:

"My heart and hand are at your feet,
With you my life would be complete.
Yours, with pleasure—
An Unknown Admirer."

Poetry! Ain't that romantic!

SUNSHINE [*takes note*]: I'll thank him for you through the paper.

ROXIE [*arranges food*]: You might tell him, too, that I like *Russian* dressing. . . . Shortcake—say, he's a regular guy!

[MATRON *disappears with other basket.* ROXIE

falls to eating heartily, and SUNSHINE *watches fascinated.*]

SUNSHINE: They'll all be so *glad* to know you can *eat.*

ROXIE [*stops short and resumes "character"*]: It's choking me, every mouthful . . . but I feel it's my duty. . . .

SUNSHINE: O it *is!* You *must* keep your strength!

ROXIE [*forces herself to a more languid pace*]: The first bite I've tasted since . . . he went to his reward . . . [*Presses handkerchief to her eyes.*]

SUNSHINE [*pats her hand*]: *Dear* Mrs. Hart!

ROXIE: O, if I could only bring him back! How gladly . . . how gladly I'd give my own life! [*Chokes with emotion, takes a few healthy bites.*] And sleep—I can't sleep either. . . . *All* night I walked about—tossing the floor. . . .

SUNSHINE: O my *dear.*

ROXIE [*in hollow tone*]: Always his face coming toward me . . . [*her emotion rises as she lives through it all*] with that terrible look—that *wild* look—in his eyes . . . We both grabbed for the gun! [*She reaches forth her hand and clasps a roll of bread.*]—And I shot [*dramatic pause*]—to save my honor!

[*The Salvation Army starts up again:*]

"In the sweet bye-and-bye,
We shall meet on that beautiful shore;
In the sweet bye-and-bye. . . ."

Ain't it grand—the Salvation Army! I love to hear 'em: I'm awful refined. . . . You see, I was born in a convent. . . . [*Continues talking and eating, while* SUNSHINE *writes, as*

THE CURTAIN FALLS

ACT TWO

ACT II

Same scene, one month later—early afternoon of May the third.

A stolid figure in blue calico sits sewing by the great end windows; Liz, *with bucket and brush, is busy scouring the floor; through the half-opened bunk-door can be seen a reclining figure that looks very much like our friend* Roxie. *The center of the stage, however, both physically and emotionally, is held by* Velma, *who stands on top of one of the white tables and turns slowly while the* Matron *turns up the hem of her dress, making it now a good twenty inches instead of sixteen from the floor.*

It is a new Velma*—ten years at least have gone from her age. Smooth, lithe, clear-eyed, and well-groomed. Her shingle bob fairly glistens with something or other, and there is a touch of tangerine rouge (from the huge make-up box on the table) on each soft cheek, and her lips are arched in a scarlet bow that matches her dress of lipstick red, which certainly catches the eye. At present she is in the agony of suppressed hysterics. Tears would spoil her make-up and uncontrolled rage distort her face, so she keeps a calm mask and rolls out a continuous flow of bitter invective in a gentle monotone.*

Velma: Damn Marshall Field!

Matron [*punches dress so* Velma *can feel where it stops*]: Is that short enough?

LIZ [*pauses for a glance and giggles*]: O my, *that'll* bring the jury to your feet all right!

ROXIE [*comes out from her bunk and leans against door-sill, eying* VELMA *with venom*]: My God, what house have they *raided* now! [VELMA *wheels and* LIZ *giggles.*] So loud it woke me up. Lord, I'll bet ever' bull in the stockyards hears it and is gnashin' his teeth!

VELMA [*tearfully, to* MATRON]: It's true. . . . Think of it; their last picture of me in *this! Damn* Marshall Field [*points trembling to empty suit-box on table*] —to send an empty box!

MATRON [*peers in box again while* ROXIE *looks like the kitty that's gulped a canary*]: Queerest thing I ever heard of—just a bunch of tissue paper, not even the bill. But you can get your money back——

VELMA: *Money!* What the *hell* do I care for *money!* It goes to the jury this afternoon and—I can't *stand* it!

MATRON: Now, dearie—it's certainly got *style.*

[ROXIE *snorts.*]

VELMA: But what's *that?* The other had *meaning.* Mr. Hessler picked it himself: a beautiful soft green that would stand out in the crowded courtroom—you never *saw* such a crowd!

LIZ: I had a crowd, too.

VELMA: But not like mine.

LIZ [*shrilly*]: I did, too—didn't I, Mrs. Morton!

VELMA [*ignoring her*]: Every seat taken, the hallway jammed——

ROXIE: A lot *you* know about crowds! Now at my auction——

LIZ [*screams*]: Shut up about your old auction!

ROXIE: There were thousands and *thousands*——

LIZ: How do *you* know?

ROXIE: The papers all *said* so, didn't they, Mrs. Morton?

LIZ: Yeah—and they're a bunch uh durned liars. [*Complacently, to* VELMA.] We *see* our crowds, don't we.

ROXIE: A handful in a courtroom!

MATRON: There's hundreds of 'em——

VELMA: *Thousands!*

LIZ: MILLIONS!

ROXIE [*in impotent rage*]: You God-damned bunch of four-flushers!

MATRON [*bangs her hand down on table*]: Now, Roxie.

ROXIE [*goes in cell*]: Aw, tie it outside!

MATRON: If you've got a headache, sleep it off; if you ain't, go on upstairs where you belong. I've had enough raggin' out uh you today.

ROXIE [*turns for a last shot*]: Anyway they *paid* for my auction and that's the rancid test. While *you're* just a free show—that's all! [*Bangs the door.*]

LIZ [*chants in sing-song*]: "Roxie's mad and I'm glad . . ."

MATRON: Shut up.

LIZ [*returns to scrubbing*]: Jealous, that's what she is—jealous.

ROXIE [*re-opens the door, with dignity*]: When My Lawyer comes——

MATRON [*looks up from hemming process*]: Now get that out of your head. Mr. Flynn ain't got time to be runnin' over here whenever you take a notion——

ROXIE [*loftily*]: This ain't a notion—it's something *very* important.

LIZ: Wants in the papers, that's what it is.

ROXIE: And he *is* coming; I sent word by Mary Sunshine. [*Slams the door after her.*]

VELMA: The next time she butts in on an interview the way she did this morning—my *God*, can't you hurry!

LIZ: Maggie an' me never dolled up this way, *did* we, Maggie?

[*The figure in the rocking-chair doesn't answer.*]

MATRON: Yeah, an' look what yuh *got*, too: the rest of your life in Joliet.

LIZ [*shrilly*]: I don't care, I told 'em what I thought, didn't I—the Judge an' jury, ever'body. [*Flings her arms out in dramatization.*] "Hang me," I said, that's what I said, "Build a platform right down at State and Madison and invite the whole town—reserved seats for ever'body, so they can all come, and have a good time." That's what I said, right to the Judge! [*To* VELMA.] And that's more'n *you've* done, for *all* your clothes! You ain't said a word now, have you, not a word!

VELMA: My lawyer won't let me.

LIZ: Yeah—he knows once you opened your mouth they'd hang you.

VELMA: That's a lie! They can tell just by *looking* at me I'm a lady. That's why it's so important what I wear . . . something quiet and refined . . . the green would have been just right. . . . [*Suddenly.*] This won't do—it simply won't *do!* [*Ready to cry, she jumps down from the table.*] Oh, I could *kill* Marshall Field! [*Stalks upstairs in rage.*]

[*The bell rings,* MATRON *answers and* ROXIE *peeps out from cell.*]

ROXIE: Is that Mr. Flynn?

LIZ: Say, what're you gonna do: make a will?

ROXIE [*darkly*]: It's all *right* what I'm goin' to do—I *want* him.

LIZ: Humph . . . "Roxie's mad and I am glad . . ."

MATRON [*calls from door*]: *Maggie—you.* At the screen.

[*Figure at window starts up bewildered. She's a rough peasant type, thirty-five or so, with straggly black hair and large plain features.*]

LIZ [*nods toward screen*]: Go on—it's your husband and kid.

[MAGGIE *gives a guttural cry, drops her sewing in the chair, and scurries heavily to the screen.* LIZ *trails after her. The* MATRON *is still at the door and no one is looking:* ROXIE *comes out from her cell with the green dress she has stolen, runs quickly and puts it back in the Marshall Field box; then extracts lipstick from make-up box and hurls it through the bars as* JAKE *and the* MATRON *enter. She then melts away to her cell.*]

MATRON: Velma's dressing—do you want to see her?

JAKE [*throws admission card on table*]: No, thanks, I'm waiting for this one.

MATRON [*reads card*]: My land, are they sendin' *her?*

JAKE [*grins*]: Due this afternoon from the Desplaines station. And she's a hell-cat for sure! That's what they call her: "Go-to-hell Kitty!"

MATRON [*tragically*]: On top of ever'thing else!

JAKE [*tosses hat on table and takes chair*]: *What* else?

MATRON: Two convictions this week—ain't it *turrible?* That allus gives ever'body the blues.

JAKE: Well, Velma will cheer 'em up: *she's* gettin' away with murder all right. Why, the Judge himself says she's the classiest one he's ever had!

MATRON: Well, I hope so! Another day of this dressin'

and I'll be goin' crazy! . . . [*Goes on down the corridor.*] What a life, what a life!

LIZ [*unconsciously imitating the matron*]: An' on top uh all that Roxie sulkin' like the devil!

JAKE: Roxie?

LIZ [*lowers voice with warning look toward* ROXIE'S *bunk*]: Shhh! She'll hear you and—*pounce!*

JAKE [*amused*]: What's the matter with her?

LIZ: Says she's got a headache, but it ain't. No, siree. A broken nose, that's what it is—out of joint because Velma's *It* now instead uh her. No more presents or letters—except from that durned fool Admirer——

JAKE: A slick guy for free advertisin'!

LIZ: Papers, Mrs. Morton, ever'body makin' over Velma, and *she* won't even help her dress or wish her good luck. Mean, that's what she is—just like my jury. 'Cause I wanted 'em to hang me, they wouldn't. Spite work, that's what it was.

JAKE: Never mind, you can appeal.

LIZ [*straightens up*]: And go through another trial? Not much I don't! I didn't mind goin' over *once*—the lawyers and judge has got to have somethin' to do and I don't mind helpin' 'em once, but I ain't got time for such foolishness again. The folks likes their fun and I done *my* part, [*smiles in pleased recollection*] didn't I?

JAKE [*also smiles*]: You *certainly* did!

LIZ: My lawyer had me talk to show 'em I was crazy, but I fooled him, all right, didn't I? [*Begins rocking and sobbing and wailing.*]

ROXIE [*sharply, opening door*]: Shut up, Liz, you're makin' my head worse.

LIZ: Glad of it. Hope it busts.

[*A shoe sails by,* ROXIE *limps out to retrieve it, and becomes angelic at the sight of* JAKE.]

ROXIE: Why, Mr. Callahan!

JAKE: Hello, Carrots!

LIZ: Go 'way, he's mine! He's havin' an interview with me—[*to* JAKE] *ain't* you. [*Tries to push* ROXIE *back with her soapy hands;* ROXIE *administers a good sharp slap, and* LIZ *cries.*]

ROXIE: Hush! or I'll tell God on you!

LIZ [*muttering*]: Go on and tell! You're such an old liar He won't believe you. [*Returns to scrubbing.*]

ROXIE [*sweetly to* JAKE]: O Mr. Callahan, I'm so glad it's you! You've been so kind to me—so—so—magnani*mous*——

LIZ: Says that to all of 'em—don't you believe her.

ROXIE [*soulfully, to* JAKE]: And now I'm goin' to do somethin' for you; it's a story.

JAKE: All right, spill it.

ROXIE [*wearily*]: I can't sleep—my head hurts! I've had a terrible night! Tossed and wept, sobbed remorse——

JAKE [*gets up in disgust*]: O my God, don't start that again! Nobody gives a damn how you're sleeping.

ROXIE [*shrilly*]: They do too! Don't you remember . . . [*Follows him.*]

JAKE: Sure, *once*—when the story was new, but it's dead now. You'll have to pull a better line than that.

ROXIE [*with sudden inspiration*]: *I've* got it: a scoop for you—a front-page story!

JAKE [*skeptically*]: Yeah?

ROXIE: It's a dress—you can raffle it off—sell chances on it . . . [*takes* VELMA'S *green dress from the box; he shakes his head in rejection and she goes on*

with inspiration] . . . The dress I wore the first time I ever went wrong!

JAKE: O my God! [*Backs away from her.*]

ROXIE: It's a museum piece. [*Follows him.*]

JAKE: Then put it back in the case.

ROXIE [*dangerously*]: I'll give it to another paper.

JAKE: Just try it, you little publicity hound! You've sure got it bad. Now listen: You'll have another fling at front page when your trial starts, but until then there's not a chance in the world! For they've caught Kitty Baxter!

ROXIE: O my God, *another* one!

JAKE: And she's got you faded, Roxie. She's a Tiger Cat and you're just a little white kitten. But I will do this: use you in a picture with her: "The Jazz-Slayer Meets the Bandit Queen."

ROXIE: Nothing doing!

JAKE: Whole cheese or none, huh? Well, suit yourself. But if you can't play ball, you'd better curl up [*nods toward cell*] and go to sleep for the next four months.

ROXIE [*genuinely startled*]: Four months! It ain't goin' to take *that* long!

JAKE: Sure! The September calendar—maybe October. Billy goes abroad for July and August.

ROXIE: *What!* Hoofs it to Europe on *my money*—the clothes I sold off of my back to pay him? And I stay cooped up here! [*Her eyes flash.*] Do you think I'm goin' to stand for that?

JAKE [*calmly*]: Sure. What can you do about it?

ROXIE [*determinedly*]: I don't know, but . . . [*Taps foot, thinking.*] God damn it, and I got my clothes all planned for a summer trial!

[*The bell rings. Moans and wails are heard from* MAGGIE *at the end of the screen, and out of sympathy* LIZ *starts up also.*]

SUNSHINE [*comes in and stops in chagrin at sight of* JAKE]: O dear!

JAKE [*grins*]: I beat you—but we're both early.

ROXIE [*goes to her, confidentially*]: O Miss Sunshine, I've something *very* important to tell you, something——

SUNSHINE [*slips out of her grasp with a sweet smile*]: Later, my dear. I've a message for Velma first. [*Goes on upstairs.*]

[*In the meantime* MATRON *has herded* MAGGIE *and her visitors, dimly seen through the screen, down toward the elevator.*]

MAGGIE [*weeping—great sobs and wails*]: Mine baby! Mine baby! Gif her to me!

MATRON [*grasps her arm and tries to draw her away*]: Shut up, you!

MAGGIE [*clings to screen with both hands*]: Let me see her—chust let me *see* her—*vonce* . . .

MATRON: Shut up! You can't see her—do you hear? [*To man outside.*] Go on away—your time's up. [*To elevator man.*] Take 'em on down, Tom.

MAGGIE: *Vonce*—let me *hold* her. . . . [*Runs along the screen like an animal and gives a final piercing wail as the elevator clicks.*]

MATRON: That's enough out of you now. Your baby's *gone*, do you understand, *gone.*

JAKE: What's the row? Who's she?

MATRON: Moonshine Maggie.

JAKE: Oh, the hunyak they nabbed for sellin' booze.

MATRON: Get her to tell you about it—she's a scream. Maggie, come here. . . . [*Woman comes slowly.*]

What's the matter, Maggie? Why don't you go *with* your baby?

MAGGIE [*simply, looking up through her tears*]: They won't let me.

MATRON: *Who* won't let you?

MAGGIE: Uncle Sam. [*Crying again.*] O missus, please, missus——

MATRON: Here, wait a minute. *Why* won't he let you? You killed a man, that's why. You're a bad girl. [*To* JAKE, *in enjoyment.*] She always cries at that. [*To* MAGGIE, *encouragingly.*] Come on tell us about it. [*Pointing to* JAKE, *with a burst of inspiration.*] Here's your Uncle Sam now!

MAGGIE [*peers through fingers at* JAKE]: You my Uncle Sam?

MATRON [*pleased with her genius*]: Sure. And he can help you if you just——

MAGGIE [*flings herself on knees before* JAKE *in wild earnestness*]: O mister, mister, Uncle Sam, let me go! My baby *need* me—Maggie not bad——

MATRON: Wait a minute; why did you kill him, Maggie?

[ROXIE, *perched on the table, smoking, watches thoughtfully the scene that follows.*]

MAGGIE [*clasps her hands on* JAKE's *knees and her eyes search his*]: Me not kill him, mister. [*Pulls the words out, one by one, and gestures.*] He come to our house —mine husband, me, mine baby—two months old she was—a *little* baby . . . [*Sobs.*]

MATRON: Forget the kid—go on.

JAKE [*gently*]: Who came, Maggie?

MAGGIE: Johann—*him.* Christmas Eve——

JAKE [*to* MATRON]: This Christmas?

MATRON: A year ago—been waitin' trial.

JAKE [*To* ROXIE]: See? And you a-growlin' over four months!

[*She tosses her head.*]

MAGGIE: An' he say, "Gimme drink, Maggie." And I give him. An' he drink, I drink, mine husband—all, [*grows distressed*] an' next day . . . men come— men come for *me,* an' say *I* kill him—*me!* [*Beats her breast and sobs again.*]

MATRON: Found him dead in a ditch—too much moonshine.

JAKE [*soberly*]: Gotta know your bootlegger these days!

MAGGIE: An' they took me away—an' I not see mine baby chust there . . . [*Points to screen.*] O Uncle Sam, mine baby need me!

MATRON: Funny, ain't it, the way she takes on over that kid!

JAKE: Did they use it at the trial? [MATRON *shakes her head.*] Lord, what rotten management!

MAGGIE: O mister, please, give me mine baby! [*Starts sobbing and wailing.*]

MATRON [*takes her arm*]: That's enough now. You can't have your baby. You're a bad girl. [*Starts her to the stairs.*]

MAGGIE [*shrieks*]: But mine baby!

MATRON: Shut up! Nobody cares about you or your baby! [*Follows her up the stairs.*]

JAKE [*soberly*]: Yep: nobody cares!

LIZ [*bursts into shrill laughter*]: It's 'cause we ain't got bobbed hair and wear cotton stockin's, Maggie, that's what it is!

[*Bell rings and* MATRON *answers.*]

ROXIE: What do you reckon a jury thinks about?

LIZ: Juries don't think—they acts.

COUNTY FREE

ROXIE: But what counts *most?*

JAKE: Just being a woman!

ROXIE: Yeah—look at Maggie.

JAKE: That wasn't the jury's fault; she had a bum lawyer. . . . D'yuh remember the Harland case? She fed lysol to her two stepchildren and the baby died; then the last day of the trial they had the other one run down the aisle cryin' "Mama! Mama!" and the jury sent her home to her husband and the dear little one who needed her! . . . And now this hunyak— a decent lawyer with a sob like that would had the jury wipin' its eyes and givin' her a medal. Gee, it gets me: wastin' a kid that way! [*Shakes his head regretfully as he saunters down the corridor.*]

VOICES [*upstairs*]: Good luck, Velma! Happy days! By-by, Old Timer!

VELMA [*enters, followed by* SUNSHINE, *in beige coat-dress, with slip-on gloves, scarlet gardenia, carrying a blue dress*]: . . . and we sail the sixteenth, if—everything comes out all right . . . [*To* MATRON, *holding up blue dress.*] I'm taking the blue, so if he don't like this I can change! [*Goes to make-up box.*] Just a little more color: beige is so trying. [*Carefully adds rouge.*]

MATRON: You better hurry—the bailiff's waitin'.

VELMA [*with genuine tragedy*]: My God, the lipstick's gone! [*The* MATRON *dashes to her—they search frantically.*] Yes, it is—*gone!*

SUNSHINE: Here, take mine!

VELMA [*reaches for it eagerly, then sinks in despair*]: But it's rose and I need tangerine!

VELMA [*Clasps her hand to her head in frenzy*]: God, I can *never* face the jury *now!* [*Staggers to the door.*]

MATRON: Well, yuh gotta go anyway.

ROXIE [*grabs* SUNSHINE *as she tries to follow* VELMA]: O Miss Sunshine, I've got a scoop for you: it's a letter from the guy who bought my garters and he's goin' on a hunger strike until I'm freed.

[SUNSHINE *tries to pull away.* ROXIE *lowers her tone mysteriously.*]

And I've got a package—a dress—and I want you to send it back and tell him it ain't refined to take clothes from men!

[*There's a noise in the hall—the sound of scuffling, muffled oaths, and a husky voice snarls:* "You God-damned bums!"]

[SUNSHINE *rushes away, leaving* ROXIE *alone in the middle of the floor. She stamps her foot and once more retires to her cell in rage.*]

MATRON [*at door*]: No, you needn't. And if she tries any bitin' *here,* I'll have 'em pull ever' tooth in her head!

[*Enter the* BAXTER GIRL, *a wiry young tough with insolent eyes set deep in a thin white face, square hard jaw, and straight scarlet mouth now drawn tight. She wears a rough topcoat over sweater and skirt, and a velvet tam over a matted curly bob.*

[*There's a moment's silence as she saunters to the middle of the floor and takes in the room: the white walls, the bunks,* LIZ *kneeling like a statue,* SUNSHINE *quivering with excitement,* JAKE *slouched against the wall, the* MATRON *watchful and waiting.*]

KITTY: Humph. [*She swings herself up on the table, takes off her hat and runs grimy hand through grimier head.*]

SUNSHINE [*tremulously*]: O Miss Baxter . . . [KITTY

turns.] I—I'm from the *Evening Star*—Mary Sunshine from the *Evening Star* . . . [*Falters under* KITTY'S *gaze.*] . . . and we'd like for you to —everyone is so *interested*—I wonder if you'd mind saying just a word or two?

KITTY [*agreeably*]: Sure: I'll say three: go to hell.

SUNSHINE: O dear! O *dear!*

MATRON [*severely*]: Now, look here, Kitty, that's no way to talk. The young lady——

KITTY [*impatiently, to* JAKE]: Get into this. I can't fight with old women, and I eat children like her—[*nods toward* SUNSHINE] for breakfast. What's on your chest? Spit it out.

JAKE: Do you remember me?

KITTY [*shakes head, flippantly*]: I've seen so many handsome faces in the last two days . . .

JAKE [*quietly*]: I was at the show-up when Mickey pointed you out.

KITTY [*eagerly*]: You were? What did he say when I'd gone—tell me! [*Goes into a rage.*] *Damn* him! If it wasn't for him—the dirty squealer!—I wouldn't be here!

SUNSHINE [*tremulously*]: O Miss Baxter, are you—are you—sorry?

KITTY: You little fool! Of course I'm sorry. Who wants to get caught? And I'd made my getaway if——

JAKE: Pretty slick.

KITTY: Wasn't it though! Passed three cops! And if I hadn't waited for *him* . . . [*Turns her back and when she faces them again her face is wet with tears of rage.*] O women are *fools!*

MATRON [*sympathetically*]: I never knew a killin' yet that a man wasn't back of it.

JAKE [*easily*]: And this other guy——

KITTY [*swiftly*]: What other guy?

JAKE [*with a knowing look*]: Say, don't you think we know?

KITTY: I know damn well you don't.

JAKE: Don't you think Mickey told me?

KITTY: Mickey don't *know*. God and me are the only ones: and we don't tell.

JAKE: It would help your case.

SUNSHINE: Yes, indeed, Miss Baxter.

KITTY: I've heard that line for two days, now, and get this: I don't squeal. They'll send me up, I guess—maybe, I'll swing—but I'll die like a lady!

JAKE [*heartily*]: Atta boy, Kitty!

SUNSHINE [*hurriedly*]: O you won't—er—*swing*. Women never—*swing*.

KITTY: Say, I wear skirts but I got guts, and I don't yell "King's X" when I'm caught. And I'll get mine, all right! Yuh see, I didn't just *kill* a man—what's a little murder! But this was a stick-up—would yuh believe it: an Ingersoll watch and four dollars! And the man—accidental-like—got bumped off. O yes, they'll get me! You can poison your husband or shoot your lover, but the pocket-book hits 'em where they live. Even a juryman has four dollars and an Ingersoll, and that makes me a "dangerous woman" . . . Think of it—me, Kitty—[*slumps in dejection*] caught on a job like that!

SUNSHINE: How long have you—er—been banditing?

KITTY: Say, for the last ten years I've carried a gun where most girls carry a powder-puff. [*Flippantly.*] A direct descendant of Captain KIDD.

[ROXIE *opens the door,* KITTY *turns, and the*

two stare at each other in instant and thorough hatred.]

What about you, Angel Face, don't you want in on this?

Jake: That's Roxie Hart, Kitty.

Kitty: And who the hell is she?

Matron [*proudly*]: The prettiest one we've ever had!

Kitty: My God, what is this: a *beauty* contest?

Jake: You've read about her.

Kitty [*coolly*]: I don't read news—I make it.

Roxie [*flares*]: So do I! A damn sight more than *you* ever will!

Kitty: O is *that* so!

Roxie: Yes, *that's* so. Thirty-five columns and twenty-two pictures.

Kitty: Hell, what's that? If I told all *I* know, it would make a dictionary, [*to reporters*] wouldn't it!

Sunshine [*afraid to breathe*]: O *yes,* Miss Baxter! It's so—so significant of this age—youth and jazz and the quest for——

Kitty: Shut up!! . . . [*To* Jake.] What's her racket anyway?

Roxie [*on verge of raging tears*]: *You* know what I did!

Sunshine [*trembling*]: A man—another man——

Kitty: O yes—your sweetie: "Killed him rather than lose him" . . . *I* remember. Say that's old stuff. [*To* Roxie.] Move on, sister, you're dead and don't know it.

Roxie [*screaming*]: I am not dead—I'll show you! [*She grabs* Kitty's *hair, all ready for a grand feminine fight, but the* Tiger Girl *tosses her off; she starts back for more, but the* Matron *interferes.*]

Matron: Now, Roxie! [*Gives her a push that sends her spinning toward her cell;* Roxie *spits like a kitten at her enemy, who triumphantly seats herself on the table.*]

Kitty: What's her record anyway? Watch me bust it.

Jake [*to* Kitty]: Shoot the works, kid.

[Roxie *paces up and down in thought and rage as* Sunshine *and* Jake *cluster around* Kitty.]

Sunshine: Tell us *just* how you happened to start! What were the factors in your life that caused you to—er—take it up? Was it jazz? The thirst for excitement? The quest for adventure? Are you a thrill-slayer?

[*Unable to endure it any longer* Roxie *gives a sudden shriek and crumbles in a faint. The* Matron, Sunshine *and* Jake *wheel from* Kitty; Liz *stops scrubbing and sits up like a squirrel;* Kitty, *from the table, watches in disgust.*]

Jake: Good Lord!

Sunshine: O what is it! She's fainted!

Matron: My God, on top of everything else! [*They all rush and kneel beside her.*] Water!

Liz: Water! Water! [*She rushes over with her bucket of suds and is intensely disappointed when* Jake *prevents the administration of her aid.*]

Sunshine: Has she been sick?

Jake [*to* Matron]: Shall I get the doctor?

Kitty [*contemptuously from her perch*]: Ain't that just like a woman?

Roxie [*moans with eyes still closed*]: O dear. . . . O dear. . . . Oh . . .

Matron [*bathes her head briskly*]: There, there!

[Roxie *opens her eyes and smiles wanly.*]

ROXIE [*weakly and sweetly—little Eva en route to heaven*]: *I*'m all right. . . . Don't worry . . . about—*me*. . . .

MATRON: She's comin' around all right now. . . . [*To* ROXIE, *who tries to sit up.*] Aren't you ashamed to——

ROXIE [*sinks back gasping*]: I can't *breathe*. . . .

MATRON: Here, help me with her.

JAKE [*nods toward the cell*]: In there?

MATRON [*shakes her head*]: No! On the table—air . . .

[SUNSHINE *gets a pillow from the cell and brushes* KITTY *aside to make room for the improvised cot.*]

Look out! [JAKE *lifts the drooped body.*] There! [*To* KITTY, *impatiently.*] Clear on out—upstairs—show her, Liz.

[KITTY *follows* LIZ *in swaggering silence, and the* MATRON *disappears for camphor and ammonia;* SUNSHINE *and* JAKE *stand looking down at* ROXIE.]

ROXIE [*revives a little, crying*]: O dear . . . dear . . . I can't *bear* it! [*Her slender frame shakes with sobs.*]

SUNSHINE: Bear *what*, darling—*tell* me!

ROXIE: Go 'way—let me alone! [*Sobbing more heartily.*] Here in jail— O dear, my . . . baby . . .

[*The* MATRON *returns on this word and there's grand astonishment all around.*]

SUNSHINE: *Baby!*

ROXIE [*faintly, wanly*]: . . . when my child . . . is born . . .

JAKE [*in genuine alarm*]: Good *God!* Say, I *must* get the doctor!

MATRON [*applies smelling salts, ammonia, etc.*]: I knew she wasn't well, but I never dreamt *this*. . . .

SUNSHINE [*in hushed ecstasy*]: Isn't it too divine! "Stork Hovers over County Jail." [*To* JAKE.] Could you ask for anything better?

JAKE [*dubiously*]: No-o . . . just so it don't light right *now*.

SUNSHINE [*superiorly*]: Don't be silly . . . it won't.

JAKE: How do you know?

SUNSHINE: No such luck.

MATRON [*with sudden inspiration*]: *That's* why she wanted her lawyer!

JAKE [*revives*]: Gosh—it's a whale of a story! Think what it will do to her case! "Young Mother Awaits Trial"——

SUNSHINE [*corrects*]: "*Girl* Mother Awaits Trial"—isn't it *too* wonderful! [*To* MATRON.] Was one ever born here before?

MATRON [*shakes head*]: Not in my day.

[*The bell rings and she goes to answer;* ROXIE *tries to sit up.*]

SUNSHINE [*tenderly*]: No, no, darling, lie still! [*Adjusts her pillow.*]

ROXIE [*faintly and sweetly*]: I don't . . . want to . . . *bother* you. . . .

SUNSHINE [*purrs*]: *Dear* Mrs. Hart . . . tell Sunshine—tell Sunshine *all!*

JAKE [*awkwardly*]: Feeling better?

ROXIE [*in hollow voice*]: O yes. . . . *I*'m all right. . . . [*Sinks back exhausted to disprove words.*]

[MATRON *admits* MR. FLYNN, *who tries to conceal his perturbation over what the* MATRON *has evidently told him.*]

SUNSHINE [*skips to meet him*]: O Mr. Flynn, isn't it too *marvelous!*

JAKE: It's a knockout, isn't it!

FLYNN: What's this, young lady? Why didn't you let me know?

ROXIE [*looks up sweetly*]: I did try to, but you wouldn't come.

FLYNN: Umm, yes . . . I was busy. Well, well, it's all right now.

ROXIE [*with sweet bitterness*]: "All right?"

SUNSHINE [*hops up and down*]: Isn't it gorgeous? Aren't you *glad?*

ROXIE: "Glad?" Oh! [*Gives a moan.*] To have your baby born—*here?* [*They all look at each other startled.*]

SUNSHINE: Wonderful! I'll phone all the women's clubs, the Parent-Teachers, the Civic League! We'll ask for letters: "Shall an Innocent Child Bear the Stigma of Jail?"

JAKE: They'll eat it alive!

FLYNN [*to* SUNSHINE]: Good! And then a petition——

SUNSHINE: O yes, miles and miles of names!

FLYNN: —asking that bail be granted so that an innocent babe can be born in God's great outdoors! [*His arm sweeps the Western hemisphere.*]

JAKE: But you won't wait for *that,* will you? When——?

SUNSHINE: When is it to be?

ROXIE: Oh—! [*Closes her eyes a moment.*] Not till fall—September.

FLYNN: Umm . . . then I'd better crowd it in before I sail—yes, I'll rush it to the jury in June.

[*A look of triumph flashes over* ROXIE's *face as she sinks back on the pillow.*]

SUNSHINE: What jury would condemn a mother-to-be!

JAKE: And, Billy, *could* a jury condemn her to death, or would it be passing judgment on two lives instead of one? And if they did, could the sentence be executed, or——

FLYNN: See the State's Attorney on that. [*Chuckles.*] It's a solar plexus for him, all right!

ROXIE [*sits up dramatically*]: My *own* life doesn't matter, but that of my child! . . . [*Gives a little tremolo as she sinks back*] . . . my child . . .

FLYNN: Don't worry, my dear: the American public will fight to the death for your innocent unborn babe!

SUNSHINE: And every true woman! Why, Motherhood itself is at stake, *isn't* it, Mr. Flynn? O wouldn't it be *wonderful* if the trial could come just before Mother's Day!

ROXIE [*soulfully*]: You've been so kind to me, Miss Sunshine . . . If it's a girl, I'm goin' to name it after you!

SUNSHINE [*kisses her*]: You darling . . . that's just too *sweet* . . .

ROXIE [*takes Jake's hand and looks up fondly at him*]: And if it's a boy, after *you.*

JAKE [*beams fatuously, holds her hand a moment, then drops it like a hot cake*]: *Hell,* no! I'm married, *happily* married, and aim to stay that way. Thanks—thanks—but . . . [*Backs off.*] Slip it to Billy here.

FLYNN [*also in alarm as she looks up at him*]: O no—*no.* I appreciate the honor, but——

JAKE: A first son should always be named for his father. [*Slowly, slowly his expression changes.*] *Say*—who *is* papa?

FLYNN [*simulating indignation*]: *What!* I'm ashamed of you, Jake! *Ashamed!*

JAKE [*slaps him on back*]: Take it easy! I mean Casely or Hart!

FLYNN: To think you'd insult this brave little woman!

JAKE: Insult or not, it's what they're all going to be askin'.

FLYNN [*steps toward him in pretended rage*]: Callahan, get out! I don't want to talk to you! Get *out!*

MATRON [*sings out at door*]: Your husband, Mrs. Hart!

JAKE [*grins and goes*]: *That's* the bird *I* want to see!

[MARY SUNSHINE *and* JAKE *scurry to the door.*]

FLYNN [*fiercely to* ROXIE, *who half rises from her couch*]: You little *fool!* Who *is* the father anyway?

ROXIE [*shrugs her shoulders wisely*]: Don't worry: he'll stick.

FLYNN: I don't want him to! [*Bitterly.*] It'll make you look as black as hell! All the sympathy for *him!*

ROXIE: I can handle him all right!

FLYNN: Shut up! You've done enough! I've got to make him *divorce* you!

ROXIE [*sits up alert*]: Alimony! [*Falls back as* AMOS *enters, with hat on back of his head and fatuous grin.* JAKE *saunters on one side,* SUNSHINE *skips on the other, and the* MATRON *trails after them.*]

AMOS [*genially to* FLYNN, *who comes to meet him*]: Well, I guess the cigars are on me!

FLYNN [*slaps him on the back*]: That's the way to take it, Hart—be a sport; what do *you* care if people laugh!

AMOS [*blankly, losing a little hilarity*]: "Laugh?"

FLYNN: After all, people's jokes . . .

JAKE [*suddenly*]: By God, it *is* funny!

[*They've reached the couch:* AMOS *tiptoes in awe and looks down at the heaving figure, face hidden by her arm.*]

AMOS [*in awed whisper*]: Will she—know me?

JAKE [*gives a howl of merriment*]: O my God! She ain't havin' it *now!*

SUNSHINE: O Mr. Hart, not till fall—September . . .

[*There is a pause;* AMOS *stands, eyes cast toward ceiling, lost in calculation.* JAKE *lifts his hand with a knowing look toward* FLYNN. SUNSHINE *gives a gasp.*]

O Mr. Hart, you don't mean——!

AMOS [*holds up hand to stop her*]: Wait a minute. . . . [*Finishes calculation.*] Say, you don't put nothin' over on me!

SUNSHINE [*in ecstasy over possible new turn*]: Lovely, lovely. . . .

FLYNN [*in melancholy tone*]: My client needs your support, Mr. Hart.

AMOS [*bitterly*]: Yeah—"Meal Ticket"—that's all I've ever been! Say, you can't make a fool out of *me!*

JAKE: What are you goin' to do—divorce her?

AMOS [*loftily*]: I ain't sayin' *what* I'll do! [*Starts off but stops as* BABE *is admitted with camera.*]

JAKE: O Babe, a couple uh flashes here!

BABE [*backs off from* ROXIE *and makes for the stairs*]: Not that lens-louse—I'm after the Tiger Girl!

JAKE: It's a scoop, kid, come on! [*With a grand gesture toward* ROXIE.] Waitin' the stork: a baby!

BABE [*to* AMOS, *as he sets up camera*]: Well, Court-Plaster, you in on this?

FLYNN [*doesn't give him a chance to answer*]: No! He's cast her off, forsaken her!

AMOS: Wait till I see my lawyer. I ain't as dumb as

I look! September—hell! [*Goes off grandly.*]

ROXIE: Amos! My husband! [*Through tears, with outstretched arms to* AMOS—*when she's sure he's gone.*] Deserted in my hour of need!

BABE: Look at the camera, sweetheart!

ROXIE: Wait a minute. [*To* SUNSHINE.] My sewing.

[SUNSHINE *hands her the baby dress left by* MAGGIE *in the rocking-chair. She bends over the dress in sewing posture, then turns Madonna face to the camera.*]

I'm making every stitch myself.

FLYNN [*takes pose by her side*]: Deserted wife and mother!

JAKE: Hot stuff!

BABE: Hold it!

[*Flash, bang,* CURTAIN!]

ACT THREE

ACT III

Scene I

Seven weeks later, a morning in June. The prisoner's room before Court opens.

A small room, dingy and bare, with great high brown walls that are beginning to scale off. A door at the right leads to the Bridge of Sighs, a window at the left looks upon air shaft and gray brick wall, and a center door opens into a small vestibule through which may be seen two other doors: one directly opposite, leading to the jury room, and one at the right, to the courtroom.

A long bare table, half a dozen straight chairs, and a bleary mirror constitute the furnishings. Flowers are stacked on the table, dresses thrown over a chair in the corner, the make-up box is open—it looks like the dressing-room of a star.

The prisoner's bailiff sits by the door, sleeping in tilted chair. Now and then it drops to the floor with a thud, but he quickly rights it and resumes his dream.

ROXIE *sits in a chair at left of table—turned relatively as it will be the witness-stand in the following scene. She wears a dress with meaning: heavy white crepe with surplice collar and bishop sleeves—a nun would envy its chastity; white shoes and hose of perplexing nudity. Her feet are crossed carelessly and one lily hand dangles a cigarette. Her eyes, wide and inno-*

cent, stare soulfully at the blank wall that represents the jury.

FLYNN *paces up and down at the right, coaching from the sidelines.*

ROXIE: . . . "my innocent unborn babe. . . ."

FLYNN: Throw your head back—*nobly!* [*She does.*] That's right!—wait! Don't look at the jury on that—you forget them—seek the eyes of your husband. He'll be over here. . . .

ROXIE: "He's divorced me, cast me off,"—I got that all right!—"but still the father of my child!"

FLYNN [*with deep emotion*]: And the man you really love! . . . Once the jury get *that* and the fact he wants you *back*, why, they'll fall all over themselves to play Cupid and restore you to his arms!

ROXIE [*studies vanity-case and adjusts make-up*]: All right; where do we go from here: . . . "my innocent unborn babe . . . ?"

FLYNN: That's all—you've finished your story: the plain, unvarnished statement of a simple, God-fearing working-girl. Sure you've got it?

ROXIE: *Got* it? I could say it in my sleep!

FLYNN: Then the cross-examination——

ROXIE: He'd better watch his step, that Harrison! If he calls me names—like he did yesterday——

FLYNN: You cry.

ROXIE: I'll crown him!

FLYNN: No, you *won't*. God, if that jury ever saw you in action—! Remember: no matter what he *says* or how mad he gets, you shrink—and cower—[*illustrates, she imitates*]—and cry, till the jury are ready to knock him down! [*Grins.*] They always lose when they bulldoze a woman! And if he says they didn't use physical violence to get those confessions——

ROXIE [*with alacrity*]: I'll hold out my arm for you to see the marks! [*Does so.*]

FLYNN: Right. And when you answer him: "I don't know. . . ." "I don't remember. . . ." [*Acts part for her.*] Weak, faint, frightened—always to the jury—with a little flutter—[*blinks his eyes appealingly, she imitates*]—especially that twenty-minute egg in the corner.

ROXIE [*rises, saunters to large mirror*]: Say, you don't have to tell me how to handle *them* babies! I ain't watched them three days for nothin'! [*Darkly.*] I've done ever'thing but give 'em my phone number!

FLYNN [*laughs coarsely*]: That'll come later. Beautiful work.

ROXIE [*with languid complacence*]: Technique: I got it.

[*There's a quick knock at the door:* SUNSHINE *with an armful of flowers;* JAKE *lounges on the threshold; through the open door a glimpse of the courtroom noise and confusion.* FLYNN *joins* JAKE, SUNSHINE *crosses to* ROXIE.]

SUNSHINE: *Good*-morning! And how is she today? [*Gives her the flowers.*] From the Parent-Teachers!

ROXIE [*tremulous voice*]: Lovely . . . it's kind friends like these . . . [*Overcome with emotion.*]

SUNSHINE [*triumphantly*]: And another baby carriage, dear! That's five!

[ROXIE *involuntarily shudders; places flowers with others.*]

JAKE [*in doorway, to* FLYNN]: Biggest crowd since Loeb and Leopold! Get ready to strut your stuff, Billy!

Voice of BABE [*outside*]: Come on, Billy, if you want in on this picture!

[FLYNN *goes;* ROXIE *gives a slide across the room, but* JAKE *bars her.*]

JAKE: That ain't your cue: men only this time, sweetheart, I'll call you when the stage is set. [*Closes door after him.*]

SUNSHINE [*who's been fluttering over letters and wires on table*]: Any more proposals?

ROXIE: O yes. . . . A beautiful one from a New York millionaire who wants to adopt me . . . and one from a widower in Colorado. . . . [*Hands her the letter.*]

SUNSHINE: "A chance to forget . . . and a name for your fatherless child. . . ." Do you think you could ever——?

ROXIE [*leans back, wan and pale*]: It's hard . . . all alone . . . but [*shakes her head sadly*] I can only love *once*. . . . [*Her lip trembles, on the verge of tears.*]

SUNSHINE [*pats her hand*]: *Dear* Mrs. Hart! [*To* FLYNN, *who returns.*] Isn't it *wonderful* the way she bears up?

FLYNN [*gravely*]: We must let her rest now—a terrible strain! You understand. . . . [SUNSHINE *nods and goes,* ROXIE *revives, and* FLYNN *takes papers from brief case and runs through them.*] Better go on with my plea before Judge gets here . . . Let's see, where were we. . . .

ROXIE [*resumes seat that represents the witness-stand* —FLYNN *sits at the table, across from her*]: You'd told how they rushed in that night and found me in my kimona. . . .

FLYNN: Ummm . . . got to cut this some if we finish today.

ROXIE: *Today?*

FLYNN: To the jury by eight and a verdict by ten—that'll catch "the home."

ROXIE: But maybe Harrison——

FLYNN: We've just agreed: three hours for him and three for me. . . .

ROXIE: But *me*——!

FLYNN: O it won't take long for you!

ROXIE [*softly, as her eyes narrow*—FLYNN, *writing, does not see*]: I hope not. [*Sigh; pause; burst of confidence.*] But I'm so *worried.*

FLYNN: Nonsense! When they hear my *speech* . . .

ROXIE: But, Mr. Flynn . . . this dress. . . .

FLYNN [*looks up startled*]: Dress?

ROXIE: If you finish tonight—I can't walk out of here all in *white!*

FLYNN: Nonsense!

ROXIE: If I only had a coat . . . You've been so particular about my clothes. . . .

FLYNN: I don't give a damn if you wear gunny-sack after the verdict.

ROXIE: I wish *I* could feel that way. O dear, I hope I can keep my *mind* on his questions.

FLYNN: You will. All right now, snap into this: He will ask——

ROXIE: And I do hope I don't get tangled up and forget—there's so much to remember! That would be *awful,* wouldn't it?—all on account of a silly old coat—or a cape, maybe—that wouldn't cost over a hundred dollars!

FLYNN [*stares in exasperation, then dawning comprehension: reaches for his purse and counts out the money*]: You've learned a great deal in three months, my dear.

ROXIE [*puts money in envelope with note*]: Thank

you, *dear* Mr. Flynn! [*Gives envelope to bailiff.*] Miss Sunshine, please. [*He goes; she drops the languid pose and turns to* FLYNN *with a hearty grin.*] Atta boy, let's go!

FLYNN [*returns to brief*]: He'll ask you why you didn't tell them the story you told this morning. . . .

ROXIE: Yeah, I've wondered about that, too.

FLYNN: You droop your head. . . . "Let us think: when and to whom did she finally reveal the dearest secret of a woman's heart? Only after long gray days in jail when her soul cried out for sympathy. . . ." Then I'll point to Mary Sunshine . . . "to a *woman.* And the State's Attorney wonders why she didn't confide in him!" And you look modest.

ROXIE: Still droopin'?

FLYNN [*nods*]: "They threatened and tortured and were successful in tearing from her the confession of her weakness——"

ROXIE: What do I do?

FLYNN [*waves for silence*]: —"the frailty that is woman in loving too well, but she kept locked within the sanctuary of her heart"——[ROXIE, *on her own initiative, tries to follow with effective pantomime*] —"the sacred secret of her coming motherhood." [*Looks up and catches her in ludicrous pose.*] What the hell——

ROXIE [*with dignity*]: I'm only trying to do what you *say.*

FLYNN [*grimly*]: We're not playing charades. Droop, that's all you do: *droop.* . . . Then I turn toward you: "I'm thankful! I'm glad! I'm *proud* that you did, Roxie Hart!"

ROXIE [*lifts head expectantly*]: Then what do *I* do?

FLYNN [*glares at her*]: What do you *want* to do—turn a cart-wheel?

ROXIE [*rebelliously*]: Looks kinda dumb just to *sit* there.

FLYNN: I'll take care of that. You *droop* and that's all. [*She tosses her head unconvinced as he skims on down the page.*] Ummm . . . "sorry" . . . "sorry" . . . ummm . . . here we are! "If sorrow could avail, Fred Casely would be here now, for she'd give her life and gladly, to bring the dead man back." You nod. [*She does, raptly.*] "But we can't do that, gentlemen. You may take her life as the State asks, but it won't bring Casely back. . . ." That's always news to 'em. . . . *Now* . . . *Now* . . . *Here's* where you start to cry. [*Covers his face completely with his hands in demonstration.*]

ROXIE [*sarcastically*]: Why don't you get me a mask?

FLYNN: Softly, very softly. . . . [*Orchestral gesture.*] "And for what purpose? To protect society? Do you fear that weeping girl?" [*Meets* ROXIE's *glare of cold suspicion.*] Weep, you fool! Can't you see how damned silly——

ROXIE [*hastily takes handkerchief*]: O yes, I was so interested I forgot.

FLYNN: Weep! "For her reformation?" Long speech ending: "We can't give her happiness—" you lift your head and listen through a mist of tears—[*she does*]—"no, it is too late for that. Betrayed, crushed, we can let her pick up the broken fragments of life, the tangled threads—" quiver your lip! . . . "We can give her another *chance!*" And that's all for *you.*

ROXIE: All for *me?* What's the rest of it about?

FLYNN [*with satisfaction*]: Harrison.

ROXIE: What's *he* got to do with it?

FLYNN: I show it ain't justice he wants, but conviction. For *that* means promotion.

ROXIE: And how long will that take?

FLYNN [*carelessly*]: Oh, an hour or so.

ROXIE [*aghast*]: An *hour* or so—talkin' about *him?* What's the big idea?

FLYNN: Why, it gets their minds off of you.

ROXIE: O it does, does it!

FLYNN: And gets them thinkin' what a dirty crook *he* is!

ROXIE: Say, whose trial is this: mine or Harrison's?

FLYNN [*chuckles as he takes a cigar*]: His, before I get through! And don't I crucify him!

ROXIE [*drums her fingers ominously on the table, seething*]: And where do *I* come in? What do I do?

FLYNN [*roaring*]: My God, is this a circus? Sit still, that's what you do, and look downcast and sad—far off, not at the jury—or bury your head in your arms on the table——

ROXIE [*bangs her hand down on the table*]: Like hell I do. It's *me* they want to see! Not *you*, hoppin' around like a little fat monkey!

FLYNN [*purple*]: It's my *speech* that brings 'em—good God, they've had enough of your damned face! And it's my speech that'll save your neck—[*significantly*] if it's saved. [*They stand glaring at each other, and* ROXIE *yields sulkily.*]

ROXIE: Aw right, go ahead and *talk* then. But not about Harrison.

FLYNN: Say, I'm runnin' this!

ROXIE: And I'm *payin'* for it!

FLYNN: And in advance—remember *that!* So don't get cute or I'll throw the whole damn thing over—walk out on you——

ROXIE [*throws chair to one side and starts after him*]: You God-damned old crook!

FLYNN: Shut up, you dirty little——

[*The door opens to admit* SUNSHINE *and* JAKE *and the* BAILIFF.]

JAKE: His Honor's here, Billy. [*To* ROXIE.] Come on, Cinderella, the stage is set.

[*There's an instant transformation.* FLYNN *gathers up his brief-case and hands* ROXIE *a bunch of lilies of the valley from the table, and she adjusts her expression to wistful innocence, as she goes slowly to the door.*]

FLYNN [*in admiration and solemn tribute*]: A brave little woman!

[*He follows immediately after her, then the* BAILIFF, *then* SUNSHINE *and* JAKE, *making a regular procession as* CURTAIN FALLS *and lights dim out to denote the passage of an hour or so.*]

SCENE 2

Afternoon same day.

Judge Canton's Court, Criminal Court Building, Chicago.

The "bench" with its high pulpit-stand is at the center [rear]; the witness-box and jury seats at the left; the clerk's desk, with phone and records, in the inclosure at the right. There is a long table, left of center, with chairs for the accused and bailiff, counsel

for the defense, attorney and runner for the State. A high rail, with center passageway, shuts off the common herd of listeners and furnishes a comfortable back for the pews of the privileged few: the semi-circle at the right for relatives of the exhibiting attorneys, visiting lawyers, politicians,—and O yes, relatives of the deceased; that on the left, with its narrow slanting table, for the representatives of the press.

Windows on the right look out toward Clark Street; a door at the left [*extreme front*] *leads to the jury room and "bull-pen" for the accused; another* [*rear, extreme right*] *to the Judge's chamber.*

Court is in session: his HONOR, *a closely shaven gentleman in the interesting forties, is on the Bench, and his* BAILIFF, *a grizzled old chap, stands, gavel in hand, just inside the rail of the inner sanctum, where the* CLERK *hugs the Bible, well-worn—on the outside, at least. The* JURY, *a dozen of assorted sizes with a preponderance of the middle-aged fatherly type, are in the box; the* COURT REPORTER, *a near-sighted dormouse, scribbles on and on.* MR. HARRISON, *resplendent in a new suit;* MR. FLYNN, *comfortable in an old one; the accused and a sleepy* BAILIFF—*all around the table.*

A half dozen reporters in press seats; cameramen in the sanctum at his HONOR'S *right, so they can have full shot at jury, witness, and accused. Cameramen just back of his* HONOR *for full shot at the auditors, counsel, and accused. Cameramen just inside the outer rail for a close-up of witness and questioning attorney. And then, just beyond the rail—in the wide passageway between general auditors and court proper—movie men from a news weekly; real movie cameras*

that grind and grind, and Klieg lights with their eerie glare.

At present, however, they are not in action, and the court is slightly relaxed. AMOS *is on the stand, and the* ASSISTANT STATE'S ATTORNEY *is reading to him from a long typewritten paper. There's a fatuous smile on his face, his eyes wander over the audience, and he speaks slowly, eager to prolong the occasion.*

MR. FLYNN, *whose chair faces* JURY *and* PRESS *but is carefully out of the* JUDGE'S *vision, is working hard. He listens with care to each word of his worthy opponent, ready to register broadly the proper emotion: amazement at his audacity, anger—anger barely restrained from physical violence—at the knavery of the fellow, disgust at his chicanery, amusement at his stupidity; and through them all a jolly camaraderie with the* JURY—*a knowing look, a shake of the head, a smile—*they'*re not to be taken in, he knows* that! *Ready also to spring up in objection.*

The JUDGE *and* JURY *may be listening to* MR. HARRISON—*they certainly hear his thundering tones—but they rest their eyes—maybe feast their eyes—on a fairer object than a dapper* STATE'S ATTORNEY *or the gangling young man in green. You have guessed it, gentle reader:* ROXIE. *And who can blame them? For the courtroom is hot and crowded and she wears that dress with meaning. Her hair, soft and shining, is an aureole in the sunlight. Her cheeks are a petal pink, her parted lips a rose. She's working hard, too—tilted forward on the edge of her chair, white hands clasped to her breast.*

HARRISON [*reads from typewritten paper*]: "Question by Sergeant Murdock: 'What happened next?'

Answer by Roxie Hart: 'He—' [Casely] 'started for his hat and coat but didn't get that far.' Question by Sergeant Murdock: 'Why not?' Answer by Roxie Hart: [*Rings out brutally.*] 'Because, by God, I shot him!' "

[*There is a startled silence and* HARRISON *pauses. The* JURY *sits up sharply and looks shocked.* ROXIE *is astounded and turns to* FLYNN, *who half-rises in involuntary anger, then sinks back and pats her arm comfortably. Perfect teamwork.* HARRISON *reads:*]

"Signed, April the third: Roxie Hart." [*Hands paper to* AMOS.] Do you recognize the signature?

AMOS [*studies it carefully*]: *I* guess so. [*Beams at crowd.*]

HARRISON: Tell the jury.

AMOS [*leans back and tweaks suspenders*]: The lady who *used* to be My Wife.

HARRISON: Exactly! And weren't you at the police station when your wife—[*smiles pleasantly*] your *ex*-wife—made this confession?

AMOS [*drawls*]: Well, now, I don't know as I'd want to go so far as to say——

HARRISON [*paces nervously*]: Yes or no. . . . Didn't you hear her say those very words in answer to Sergeant Murdock's questions?

AMOS: *Some* of them—yes. . . .

HARRISON [*flings paper down in exasperation*]: What's your purpose in testifying? What are you——

FLYNN [*springs up*]: Your Honor, I object! The State's trying to discredit its own witness!

HARRISON [*hurls at* AMOS]: Why did you come to me and——

FLYNN [*excitedly*]: Your Honor, the sole purpose of

this questioning is to cast reflection upon the witness!

JUDGE [*in a bored tone*]: Sustained.

HARRISON [*stands a moment nonplussed, then turns on his heel in disgust*]: Take the witness.

FLYNN [*nods pleasantly to* AMOS]: You are at present divorced from the defendant?

AMOS: Yes, sir.

FLYNN: Who obtained this divorce?

AMOS: *I* did.

FLYNN: When did you file suit?

AMOS: May the fourth.

FLYNN: Was there any particular reason, Mr. Hart, for your filing suit on this exact day?

AMOS: Well, sir, the papers came out the day before with the story of—[*flounders*] the statement that she was—that there was goin' to be a little stranger . . .

FLYNN [*smiles broadly*]: Now, Mr. Hart, is that grounds for divorce!

AMOS [*wisely*]: Little too *much* of a stranger! [*Likewise gets a smile.*]

FLYNN: You mean by that you doubted the paternity of your child? [*Smiles again.*] I mean *the* child.

AMOS: Yes, sir. [*Warms up.*] And you can see how that made *me* look—like I was *easy*.

FLYNN [*smiling*]: And they can't put anything over on *you*, can they?

AMOS: *I'll* say they can't!

FLYNN: Had your wife apprised you of her condition prior to said announcement?

AMOS: How's that?

FLYNN: Had your wife told you about this "stranger"?

AMOS [*promptly*]: No, sir—neither one of 'em.

HARRISON: If counsel is going to pursue this line of inquiry further, your Honor, don't you think it would be advisable to exclude women from the room?

[REPORTERS *sit up animatedly and take down every word.*]

JUDGE [*with slow smile*]: If any lady wishes to leave, she may do so now. [ROXIE *starts up with alacrity and he adds, with another smile:*] Except the defendant.

FLYNN [*looks around at the crowd and calls out genially*]: That's right: stick to me, girls! [*To* AMOS.] Did you question her after you read it—talk it over with her?

AMOS: No-o——

FLYNN [*suddenly flames*]: Just took the word of a reporter—believed a vile story you read in some yellow paper——

HARRISON: Your Honor, I object: irrelevant and immaterial. Paternity and divorce have nothing to do with the murder of Fred Casely by Roxie Hart.

FLYNN [*wheels toward him*]: Paternity and divorce were introduced by you to besmirch the name of that defenseless girl! [ROXIE *drops her head modestly.*] Your Honor, I'm merely cross-examining on direct.

JUDGE [*very bored*]: Proceed.

FLYNN [*in lighter tone*]: Now, Mr. Hart, do you expect the jury to believe that—with all due respect to the press—[*Wave and bow toward them*—JAKE *gives a grin and salute in response*] our courts would grant you a divorce merely on a newspaper story?

AMOS: No, sir, I had a statement, that she'd made and signed herself, all about how she and this——

FLYNN: And where did you get this "statement"?

AMOS [*looks blandly toward* HARRISON *who frowns*]: From the State's Attorney's office.

FLYNN [*nods comprehendingly*]: Oh—so the State's Attorney's office gave you a statement that enabled you to get a divorce, did it . . . that enabled you to cast aside the woman you had sworn to love and cherish—for better or worse. . . . [ROXIE *wipes her eyes carefully.*] And *what,* Mr. Hart, did *you* give the State's Attorney?

HARRISON [*springs up, hotly*]: Your Honor, this is too much! [*To* FLYNN]. *Withdraw* that, *withdraw* that, you——!

JUDGE: Gentlemen, gentlemen. . . . [*With reproachful glance toward* FLYNN.] Counsel should be more discreet.

FLYNN: All right, your Honor, I withdraw the question [*pause*] as unnecessary. [*To* AMOS.] You obtained your divorce then because you doubted the legitimacy of this offspring?

AMOS: Yes, sir. I'm nobody's fool, I'm not.

FLYNN: And if you became convinced you were wrong—had been hasty, you'd be man enough to admit it, *wouldn't* you?

AMOS: Yes, sir.

FLYNN: You'd be willing, in fact, to take her back?

AMOS [*his eyes meet* ROXIE's]: Yes, I'd take her back—provided, of course——

FLYNN: Excused! [*Halts* AMOS *as he starts to leave.*] One word more—just answer where you are: Can you swear you are *not* the father of this child?

AMOS: We-ell—*no*—not exactly. . . .

FLYNN: Come here. [*They go to* JUDGE; REPORTERS *spring up and cluster about bench; hushed*

conference while AMOS *shakes his head first "Yes," then "No," then "Yes," to* JUDGE's *questions.*] *That's*—all!

AMOS [*swings off*]: I ain't as dumb as I look.

HARRISON [*curtly*]: The State rests.

[*The* CLERK *calls in loud voice:* "Roxie Hart!" *A* MOVIE MAN *converses with the* JUDGE *hurriedly while cameras are adjusted. She takes the stand. Klieg lights flood the room with uncanny glares; the* JUDGE *straightens and looks judicial; the* LAWYERS *turn careful profiles to the camera, and the* JURY—*for this moment—look their sacred responsibility.*]

CLERK [*holds up Bible*]: Blahblahblahblahblahblahblah . . . truth . . . truth . . . truth . . . selpyuh God.

ROXIE [*so bravely for all her fright*]: I do.

[*She is excited, she is thrilled: the crowds, the lights, the noise—all for her! She takes to it like a duck to water.*]

FLYNN [*takes his stand at her right—he doesn't want to cheat the camera: they must have at least a profile, preferably three-quarters*]: What is your name? [*He is looking at the* JURY, *but it is intent on the camera and does not answer.*]

ROXIE [*lifts eyes heavenward*]: Roxie Hart.

FLYNN [*flings his arm out with a magnificence that is alarming—the camera can't hear words*]: Where do you live, Mrs. Hart?

ROXIE [*closes her eyes with vampire passion and clasps one hand to her heart*]: Cook County Jail.

FLYNN [*a terrific impact of fist in palm and the famous Billy Flynn scowl*]: How old are you?

ROXIE: Twenty-three. [*Chokes the "three" so lip readers will not see, and wipes a tear from her eyes.*]

[*The camera has all it wants for a while; lights are gone, the grinding stops and there's general relaxation from the terrific strain.*]

FLYNN: Let's see—where were we? O yes: were you acquainted with Fred M. Casely, the deceased?

ROXIE: Yes, sir.

[*Note: From now on she's very much the plain, simple, honest and God-fearing working-girl.*]

FLYNN: When did you first meet him?

ROXIE: Ten minutes after five, September the eighth. [*Like all good witnesses she has mastered the mnemonic system recommended by Mr. A. of Seattle.*]

FLYNN: Where did this meeting transpire?

ROXIE: In the vestibule of the Waverly Company, 1861 South Michigan Boulevard, Chicago, Illinois.

FLYNN: Relate to the jury what conversation, if any, took place between you on this date.

ROXIE: It was rainin' and I was standin' there with my girl friend lookin' out, for we didn't have any umbrella. And Mr. Casely came by and said, "It's a fine day for ducks," and we both said yes.

FLYNN: Both of you?

ROXIE [*after conscientious thought*]: Yes, sir, both of us. And he said he had an umbrella and would we care to walk to the car——

FLYNN: Car?

ROXIE: Street-car. And we said yes—[*forestalling his question*] *she* said yes, and we started out and before we got to the corner he said his auto was there and he'd take us home. Well . . . you know how crowded a Cottage Grove car is at five-thirty on a rainy day when it gets to Eighteenth Street, and we said yes. And he did—her first, then me.

MARIN COUNTY

FLYNN: How did Mr. Casely conduct himself during this drive? [ROXIE *looks puzzled.*] Unusually—friendly in any way?

ROXIE: No, sir.

FLYNN: When was the next time you saw him?

ROXIE: The following Tuesday—it rained again and he took us home.

FLYNN: Both of you?

ROXIE: Yes, sir, both of us.

FLYNN: And the next time?

ROXIE: Thursday.

FLYNN: And then?

ROXIE: Friday. [*Apologetically.*] We had a kinda wet spell along then, you remember.

FLYNN: And was your friend with you each time?

ROXIE: O yes, sir.

FLYNN: Did you ever see Mr. Casely on any other occasions?

ROXIE: Yes, sir.

FLYNN: Where?

ROXIE [*innocently*]: Why, at the office.

FLYNN [*impatient at her dullness*]: Socially, I mean. Did he ever take you places?

ROXIE [*falters slightly*]: Yes, sir.

FLYNN: Do you recall the first place you went with him?

ROXIE: Yes, sir: the Policemen's Benefit Ball. [*She looks reproachfully at* OFFICERS MURDOCK *and* PATTERSON, *who are trying to hang her; they twist, uncomfortable.*]

FLYNN: When was that?

ROXIE: Christmas Eve.

FLYNN: Relate to the jury what conversation, if any, you had in regard to this ball.

ROXIE: Well, one evening——

HARRISON: I object, your Honor; time and place.

FLYNN: Can you fix the time and place?

ROXIE [*promptly*]: Five eighteen Tuesday, October the seventh, going south on Michigan Boulevard. And he said he had a couple of tickets to the ball, which was to be at the Coliseum and a very swell affair and he had been aimin' to take his sister and she couldn't go and would I care to and if I did and had nobody to go with, why *he'd* take me.

FLYNN [*leans forward*]: Did you know at this time, Mrs. Hart, that he was *married?*

ROXIE [*shocked*]: O *no*, sir! O *no*, Mr. Flynn!

FLYNN [*with sad reproach*]: But *you* were married, Roxie.

ROXIE [*drops her head*]: Yes, sir.

FLYNN: You believe in the sacredness of the marriage tie, don't you?

HARRISON: Your Honor, I object: what the witness believes is immaterial.

FLYNN: You know the marriage tie is sacred, don't you?

ROXIE [*reverently*]: Yes, sir. . . . That's what I told him all along. . . .

FLYNN [*in feigned surprise*]: Oh—so he had asked you before?

ROXIE: O yes, sir—from the very start!

FLYNN: Will you tell us, then, just why you made an exception for the Policeman's Ball?

ROXIE [*in low tone*]: *I* dunno . . . so many things happen—and you don't know why. . . . [*Looks far-away and gives a long sigh.*] But I wouldn't have, I'm sure I wouldn't have, if my—if Amos—[*lips tremble and delicate pause*] Mr. Hart—and me hadn't quarrelled that mornin'.

FLYNN [*again surprised*]: Oh, did you and your—Mr. Hart—quarrel?

ROXIE [*drops her head—life crushed within her, hope beaten out*]: Yes, sir.

FLYNN: And who was to blame?

ROXIE [*flat, weary tone*]: *I* was, I guess . . . seems like I couldn't stop pesterin' him. . . .

FLYNN: "Pestering him"—what about?

ROXIE [*flings her head back and a rich tone breaks through*]: Because I wanted a *home!* I didn't want to work—he was makin' his forty a week and I wanted a *real* home—with children. . . . [*Her head droops again. The* JURY *wipes its eyes.*]

FLYNN [*decides to forgive her and his tone is gentle*]: I see. So conditions in your home caused you to——

HARRISON: Your Honor, I object to Counsel's drawing conclusions as to——

FLYNN [*blandly*]: Strike it out. And so you drifted on and on in this relation, unhappy——

ROXIE: O *most* unhappy!

FLYNN: *Why* were you unhappy?

ROXIE: Because I was deceiving my husband, and because I—[*fainter*] was doing . . . wrong. . . .

FLYNN: Why didn't you stop?

ROXIE: I *did* want to—I *tried* to—but he'd plead—Mr. Casely—and say he couldn't live without me. . . .

FLYNN [*to* COURT REPORTER]: State's Exhibit D. [*Hands paper to* ROXIE *and pauses a moment; then his tone is cold: the subject is distasteful to him and he has disgust for a man who would drag such matters into a courtroom.*] In this you admit illicit relations with the deceased. [*She is in an agony of shame.*] Is this statement true or false?

ROXIE [*in low tone*]: It's—true. [*She will not lie—you can feel that!—she will not lie!*]

FLYNN: You have heard other statements read to the jury, alleged to be made by you to Officer Murdock—I hand you State's Exhibits E and F. Are these true or false?

ROXIE [*energetically*]: False!

FLYNN: Do you accuse the State of changing——

HARRISON: Now, your Honor——

JUDGE: Rephrase your question.

FLYNN: Describe your state of mind at the time of the confession.

ROXIE: O I was all upset—frightened—worried—cryin'—laughin'——

FLYNN: Do you think it might be called hysterical?

ROXIE: Yes, sir, that's it: hysterical.

FLYNN [*pauses a moment, then speaks in deep, solemn tone*]: Roxie Hart, the State charges you with the murder of Fred Casely . . . guilty or not guilty?

ROXIE [*speaks first to* JUDGE*—then to* JURY]: Not guilty—O not guilty! I—I *killed* him, yes—but not—not the *other!*

FLYNN [*quietly*]: Do you remember Friday, April the third?

ROXIE [*low, steady tone*]: I do.

FLYNN: Tell the jury now, in your own way, the happenings of that day from five o'clock on. Take your time and speak clearly.

ROXIE [*turns to face the* JURY *directly—they perk up with interest*]: I left work as usual at five, took the Cottage Grove car, stopped at the A. & P. for some baking-powder for biscuits for breakfast next

morning. . . . He was always so *fond* of my biscuits. . . .

FLYNN: Yes, yes. . . . [*Sympathetically.*] And what time was this?

ROXIE: About twenty uh six. . . . And I was just getting into a housedress when the doorbell rang. I thought it was Irma—my girl friend, and so I slipped on a sorto' kimona and went to the door.

FLYNN: Yes, and who was there?

ROXIE: It was Mr. Casely.

FLYNN: Who spoke first?

ROXIE: He did.

FLYNN: Do you remember what he said?

ROXIE: Yes, sir: "Hello, Roxie, I had to see you just once more!"

FLYNN: What did he mean by that?

ROXIE: I had written him a note telling him it was all over, that we must quit, for it could never end in happiness.

FLYNN: What brought you to this decision?

ROXIE: I had learned he was married, and . . . I realized I loved my husband . . . and perhaps we could be happy. . . .

FLYNN: And did he go away as you asked him to?

HARRISON [*shouting*]: I object to Counsel's feeding the witness!

FLYNN: I beg your pardon. . . . And what did *you* say?

ROXIE: I begged him to go away and tried to close the door, but he forced his way in! Then I told him to wait in the living-room while I dressed. . . . [*It's hard for her to go on*] . . . but he followed me into the bedroom. . . .

FLYNN: Yes? And then? [*Asks each question with an air of triumph.*]

ROXIE: I begged him to go, told him the neighbors would see him, that my husband would soon be home. . . .

FLYNN: And what did *he* say?

ROXIE: He'd been drinking and wouldn't listen. Finally he said if I'd take just *one* drink with him, he'd go. And I did.

FLYNN: What was the liquor? What kind was it?

ROXIE [*ingenuously*]: I don't know. It was in a bottle and tasted very bad.

FLYNN [*smiles*]: Bad liquor, or just tasted bad to *you?*

ROXIE [*seriously*]: Yes, sir.

FLYNN [*nods triumphantly*]: Why didn't you scream?

ROXIE: I was ashamed for the neighbors to know . . . you know how you'd feel. . . . [*Her eyes meet the butcher's and he nods.*] . . . And I'd kept tellin' him what I'd said in the letter—that no good would come of it, that I loved my husband——

FLYNN: Oh—you *told* him that you loved your husband? And what did he say to that?

ROXIE: It made him mad, and he said it didn't matter: I was his. And he kept trying to take me in his arms . . . [*Looks appealingly at* FLYNN *and hesitates.*]

FLYNN: Yes, Roxie: you must tell the jury *everything.* [*The* REPORTERS *sit up alert.*] They have a right to *know.* [*The* JURY *looks as if it's not only a duty but a pleasure.*]

ROXIE [*faint*]: And finally . . . I told him . . . my delicate condition. . . . [*The moment for which they have waited.*]

FLYNN: And what did he say to *that?*

ROXIE: He *swore*—[*looks shocked*] and said that he'd *kill* me before he'd see another man's child . . .

[*The* REPORTERS *lick it up.*]

FLYNN: Where were you at this time?

ROXIE: By the victrola.

FLYNN: Show the jury. [*She scrambles to the diagram hanging on the wall.*] And Casely?

ROXIE: Here. [*Indicates bed.*]

FLYNN [*impressively as he hands her back to the witness chair with all the tenderness due a mother-to-be*]: Now, Roxie, tell the jury *just* what happened next.

ROXIE: The pillows were thrown back, and Mr. Hart's revolver was layin' there. He grabbed—I knocked it from his hand. It fell to the floor and he whirled me aside—back by the dresser now—and we both grabbed for the gun. I reached it first, then he started toward me. . . . I can see him now with that awful look in his eyes——

FLYNN: What kind of look? Describe it to the jury.

ROXIE: I can't describe it; but a terrible look—angry—wild——

FLYNN [*purrs*]: Were you afraid? Did you think he meant to kill you?

ROXIE [*shudders*]: O yes, sir! I knew if he once reached the gun. . . .

FLYNN [*purrs more deeply*]: It was his life then or yours?

ROXIE: Yes, sir. [*Faintly, as she lifts her eyes.*] And *not* . . . *just* mine . . . [*pause, then continues dramatic narrative*] . . . coming right toward me, with that awful look—that wild look . . . I closed my eyes . . . and . . . [*barely whispers*] . . . shot. . . .

FLYNN: In defense of your life?

ROXIE [*lifts her head nobly*]: . . . to save my husband's innocent unborn child!

FLYNN [*with wave of hand to* HARRISON]: Take the witness.

[*Black for an instant to denote the passage of several hours. It is late that afternoon and* FLYNN *is making his closing plea. He stands before the* JURY—*this is the hour he earns the five thousand. And Billy Sunday himself never worked harder, with muscle as well as brain, minus coat and collar, with perspiration standing in great beads on his forehead. He's fighting, gentlemen, fighting, with every drop of his blood, for the life of that brave little woman. The* JURY, *hypnotized, enthralled, hangs on each word and follows every gesture. The* PRESS *watch benignly; they know his whole bag of tricks, but* BILLY'S *always worth watching. Even the* JUDGE *listens.*

And ROXIE—*? This scene is really the close of an hour's duel between* ROXIE *and* FLYNN. *When the curtain goes up, honors are even and she is faithfully registering the emotions outlined for her in rehearsal. Gradually, however, she extends her field; deeper emotion, gesture, writhing. She works for her audience—the* JURY; *and they, fascinated, are torn between her contortions and the fervid orator.* FLYNN, *who feels them slipping, turns—when his speech permits—and tries to stop her with furtive gesture. Of course she is oblivious, and he is forced to redouble his own efforts—louder tone, wilder manner—to drown her out. Until toward the end you have them both playing in grand crescendo. . . .*]

FLYNN [*in low dramatic tone*]: Can't you see her that night? Alone! Alone! With only God and that—*body*. . . . [*Pause.*] You and I have never killed, gentlemen; *we* do not know the agony of that hour; we can only guess the mad regret, the bitter reproach, the torture, the *hell* [*he grinds it out like a minister*] she lived through then. The soul's Gethsemane. Alone. [ROXIE *droops in the approved manner—the* JURY *gives her a glance of sympathy, then is back with* FLYNN.] And into this sacred room rush the police. [*He snarls an imitation of* MURDOCK *and grasps an imaginary arm*—ROXIE *studies her wrist.*] "Why did you kill him? Come on now, yuh'd better *tell!*" Threats. Physical violence. . . . And the worthy State's Attorney! [*Sarcasm.*] With his kindness, his promises: [*Imitates* HARRISON *with a husky whisper*] "Come clean and I'll help you! Come clean and I'll get you off!" [ROXIE *follows, nodding eagerly, with a look of reproach at* HARRISON.] Frightened, hysterical, the girl breaks down. She *does* confess. Dazed and bewildered she says "yes" to whatever they ask her. . . . [*Takes statement from* COURT STENOGRAPHER.] Do *you* believe, gentlemen, that's a word-for-word confession he read you? Of *course* not! No human being could have made such a deliberate, coherent statement—certainly not this delicate, frightened girl. . . . No, there was careful selection; a bit here [*lifts out morsels from the air*]—a bit there—an addition, deletions—*any*thing to build up his case! [*He's hoarsely confidential.*] He's *got* to bring home a conviction or LOSE HIS JOB! [*All eyes are turned in scorn toward* HARRISON, *who slinks down with eyes downcast.*] And then he read it to you: malicious

twist of meaning. . . . [*Reads as* HARRISON *read in former scene:*]

. . . "but he didn't get that far. . . ."

"Question: 'Why not?' "

"Answer: 'Because, by God, I shot him.' "

That's the way he read it to you, ain't it!

[JURY *looks grieved—it's true; he flings the paper on table.*]

He would have you believe, gentlemen, that child *sitting there* [ROXIE *lifts her head—the picture of girlish innocence*] SWORE. [*He is shocked—as the* JURY *was that morning.*] Those were her words, yes, but Ah! what a different meaning! This beast, this drunken brute, who had forced his way into her home—and remember, gentlemen, if she had shot him down then, the law would have upheld her!—was coming toward her, threatening her life. . . . [*Breaks off and resumes in melancholy tone.*] What was the future to her? Crushed, betrayed, broken-hearted. . . . Nothing—*less* than nothing. But the little life that fluttered beneath her heart—[*taps his fountain-pen pocket*]—ah! mother-love stirred within her . . . and those words were a tribute to her Omnipotent Maker who stood by in her hour of need: [*He brings it out with ministerial reverence*—ROXIE's *gaze is directed heavenward and her hands clasped to her heart in prayer.*] "By GOD I shot him."

[JURY *looks relieved—effective pause while little Eva does her stuff. He goes on quietly.*]

I'm sorry she loved as she did. I'm sorry this monster preyed upon her innocence—I wish he had never entered that happy little home. If sorrow could avail [*he warms up*] Fred Casely would be here now, for she'd give her life and gladly to bring

the dead man back! [ROXIE *nods in ecstatic confirmation and begins enthusiastic pantomime.*] But we can't do that, gentlemen. [*Melancholy.*] You may take her life as the State asks, but it won't bring Casely back. [*Gives* ROXIE *a fixed look. She recalls her cue and starts moaning and sobbing.*] And for what purpose? To protect society? [*His voice rings out.*] Do *you* fear that weeping girl? [*Finger darts to the tailor.*] Do *you?* [*To the hard-boiled egg in the corner.*] Do *you?* [*They don't—he continues.*] For her reformation? She learned her lesson, gentlemen, in that dark hour alone. For punishment? My *God,* she's punished enough! No—none of these! But to satisfy the greedy ambition of the prosecution! PROSECUTION? *No,* PERSECUTION! You are asked for a life, gentlemen—[*he turns in exasperation at the loudness of* ROXIE's *wails, and gives her a signal for quiet, which she sublimely ignores; he raises his voice to a shriek in the effort to drown her*] by one who would climb to fame on dead bodies! [*Pause, filled with her sobs, almost howls.*] We can't give her happiness—[*the* JURY *is with her*] no, it is too late for that. Betrayed, crushed, we can only let her pick up the broken fragments of life, the tangled threads—[*she's supposed to quiver her lip, but instead she rises, staggers toward the* JURY *with outstretched hands.*]—we can give her another chance! [*She totters, gives a wild shriek, and falls in a dead faint by his side. Grand confusion, and she's carried out. He turns to* JUDGE.] We rest, your honor; you may give the case to the Jury.

[*Black for an instant to denote the passage of three or four hours.*]

[*Courtroom, ten o'clock that night. Gloomy and dull, with doors closed, and the* PRESS awaiting *verdict.* AMOS *strides in passageway;* JAKE *stands at vestibule door—half ajar, disclosing* BAILIFF *with ear to keyhole of jury-room;* MEN *and* WOMEN REPORTERS *lounge in press seats. A poker game has just finished among* CAMERAMEN *at* CLERK's *desk, and* BABE *is giving imitation of* FLYNN *for* PHOTOGRAPHERS *and the lawyer himself, who watches from* JUDGE's *doorway.*]

BABE [*stretches forth hands and exaggerates* FLYNN's *manner*]: . . . And then kerflop! The purtiest faint I ever saw—and my camera not even set! And they carried her out just like a stiff! Or hypnotized—yuh could a stuck pins in her.

FIRST PHOTOGRAPHER: God, what a pitcher that would uh made! And this dirty bum— [*Gives* FLYNN *a shove.*]

FLYNN: That was a real faint, boys, an honest-to-God——

SECOND PHOTOGRAPHER: Tell it to Sweeney! Right at the end uh your speech!

FLYNN: It ended my speech, all right!

THIRD PHOTOGRAPHER: And her in there—dancin' the Charleston! [*With sudden inspiration.*] Make her do it again *now*—we could get her pitcher——

BABE: Naw, all they want now's the verdict . . . Good Lord, I wish— [*Suddenly.*] *I've* got it!

[*They fall to discussion;* FLYNN *joins the* REPORTERS.]

JAKE [*returns from vestibule*]: Well, they're through with the Klan and Prohibition, so there ought to be one before long.

FLYNN: What is it now?

JAKE: Ten to two. The drummer says he knew a jane like her once, and the third guy from the end—just pure cussedness!

[*Flash, bang! Flash, bang! Flash, bang! Everyone stares in amazement—there's nothing to take pictures of; the cameras are not set, just the flash-light rods.*]

Hey there, what's the big idea?

BABE: Smokin' 'em out. If *that* don't bring 'em, it's Gabriel's cue!

[*The* JUDGE *appears at the door from his chambers, and from the prisoner's room* [*left*] ROXIE—*minus her dress—peeps out.*]

Listen, Judge, can't we get a few pitchers now?

FIRST PHOTOGRAPHER: It's gettin' *late*, and if you want this with your oatmeal . . .

BABE [*yells to* ROXIE]: Come on, Red, we're shootin' 'em now! [*To* JUDGE.] You and her and counsel. . . .

AMOS: And me here with the ring and license.

BABE: Now if we just had the jury—couldn't yuh call 'em out for a minute?

FIRST PHOTOGRAPHER: Sure! Then we'd be through!

JUDGE [*in alarm*]: NO! That would be grounds for reversal. . . . I'm sorry, but . . .

FIRST PHOTOGRAPHER: Aw right, one uh her in her lawyer's arms.

BAILIFF [*rushes in, loud whisper*]: They're comin'! They're comin'!

[FLYNN *hurries to prisoner's room to get his fair charge.*]

BABE [*grins*]: I knew that'd bring 'em!

[*All scramble to appointed places. The* JURY *files in;* ROXIE, *in exquisite orchid evening gown, enters on* FLYNN'S *arm;* FOREMAN *gives* JUDGE *envelope. There is an expectant hush—after all you never know, you know!*]

JUDGE [*reads*]: "We, the jury, find the defendant not guilty."

[*Flash, bang! Flash, bang! A shriek from* ROXIE, *cheers, confusion, and general bedlam all around. She kisses the* JUDGE, *the* STENOGRAPHER, *anybody else within reach: the* JURY *climbs over the rail. Pressed by her public she mounts the counsel table, flings her arms out in a carefully set speech delivered in her best artificial manner, while the* CAMERAMEN *go on with their pictures and the Klieg lights take up their glare.*]

ROXIE: Dear friends, kind friends, who have stood by me in the dark hours of the past: His Honor—Mr. Flynn—Mr. Callahan—[JAKE, *by the outer door, gives a look of disgust*] Mary Sunshine—and all you guys on the jury: you've been so kind to me—so—so *encouragin'*—that I'm goin' to do somethin' for you——

[*Bang, bang, bang! Three pistol shots from the corridor outside, then a woman's shriek. All stand poised a moment in tense silence.*]

JAKE: What the hell!

SUNSHINE [*avidly*]: Another murder!

[*A police whistle outside. As one man the crowd flings around from* ROXIE *and breaks for the door.*]

ROXIE: Hey, you! Come back here! [*They go steadily on.*] Wait a minute, I want to tell you something!

[*No one even gives her a look—she bursts into old-time rage.*] You God-damn bums walkin' out on me when I want to make a speech! [*Climbs down angrily and starts after them.*] It's important—it's *news!*

FLYNN [*only he and* AMOS *are left now*]: Forget it: you're all washed up!

ROXIE [*hopping around like a hornet*]: I am not washed up! I'm goin' in vaudeville—I'm famous!

AMOS: What!

ROXIE: Sure: booked solid for ten weeks!

AMOS: But the wedding——

ROXIE: No wedding! It would ruin my career!

AMOS: But the ring—[*takes from pocket and shows her*] platinum and diamonds this time!

ROXIE [*grabs it*]: I'll keep it to remember you by!

AMOS: But the baby, Roxie, the baby!

ROXIE: Baby! My God, do I look like an amachure!

BABE [*dashes in to his camera all set for action*]: Another case for you, Billy! [*Over his shoulder.*] It won't take a minute now, Captain: just a little pitcher of the two slayers with you here between 'em.

[*They enter: a* POLICE SERGEANT *and a weeping, defiant* GIRL, *followed by* CAMERAMEN *and* REPORTERS, *who cluster about like flies . . . mosquitoes . . . buzzards.*]

JAKE [*to* BILLY]: Another jane out for trigger-practice—bumped off the boy friend, also his wife: gee, ain't God good to the papers!

ROXIE [*in spasm of jealousy and envy*]: Two of 'em—O my God!

JAKE: Come on, Carrots: a picture of you with Machine-Gun Rosie. [ROXIE *slides into position as she sees the cameras are set.*] "The Jazz-Slayer

Meets the Cicero Kid!" Shake hands! [*Poses them.*]

ROSIE: No! [*Jerks her hand away and flings arm up to cover her face.*] I don't want in the papers!

JAKE [*jerks it down again*]: Come on, sister, yuh gotta play ball: this is Chicago!

[*The lights go on, the cameras grind; flash, bang,* CURTAIN!]

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